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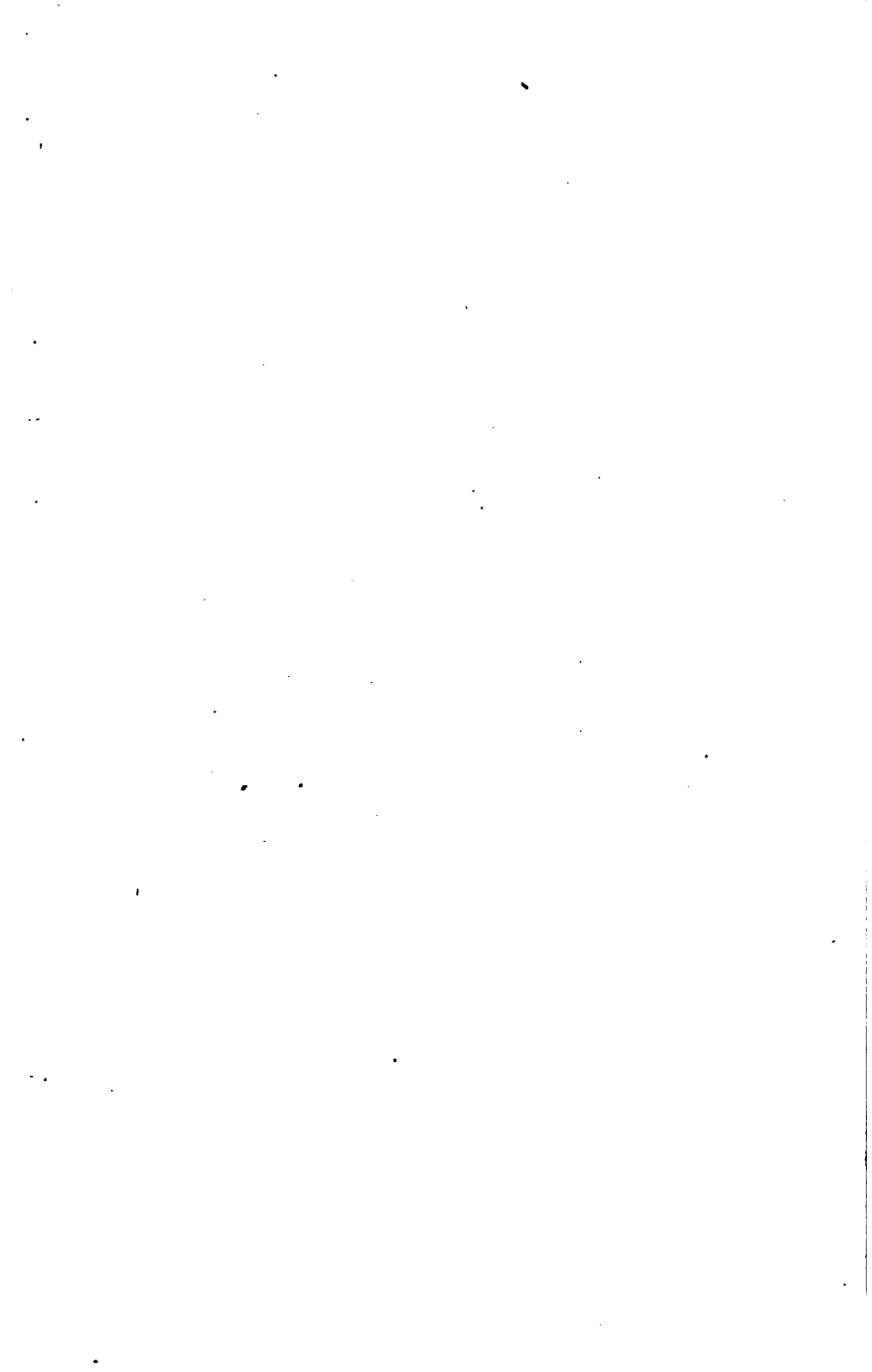
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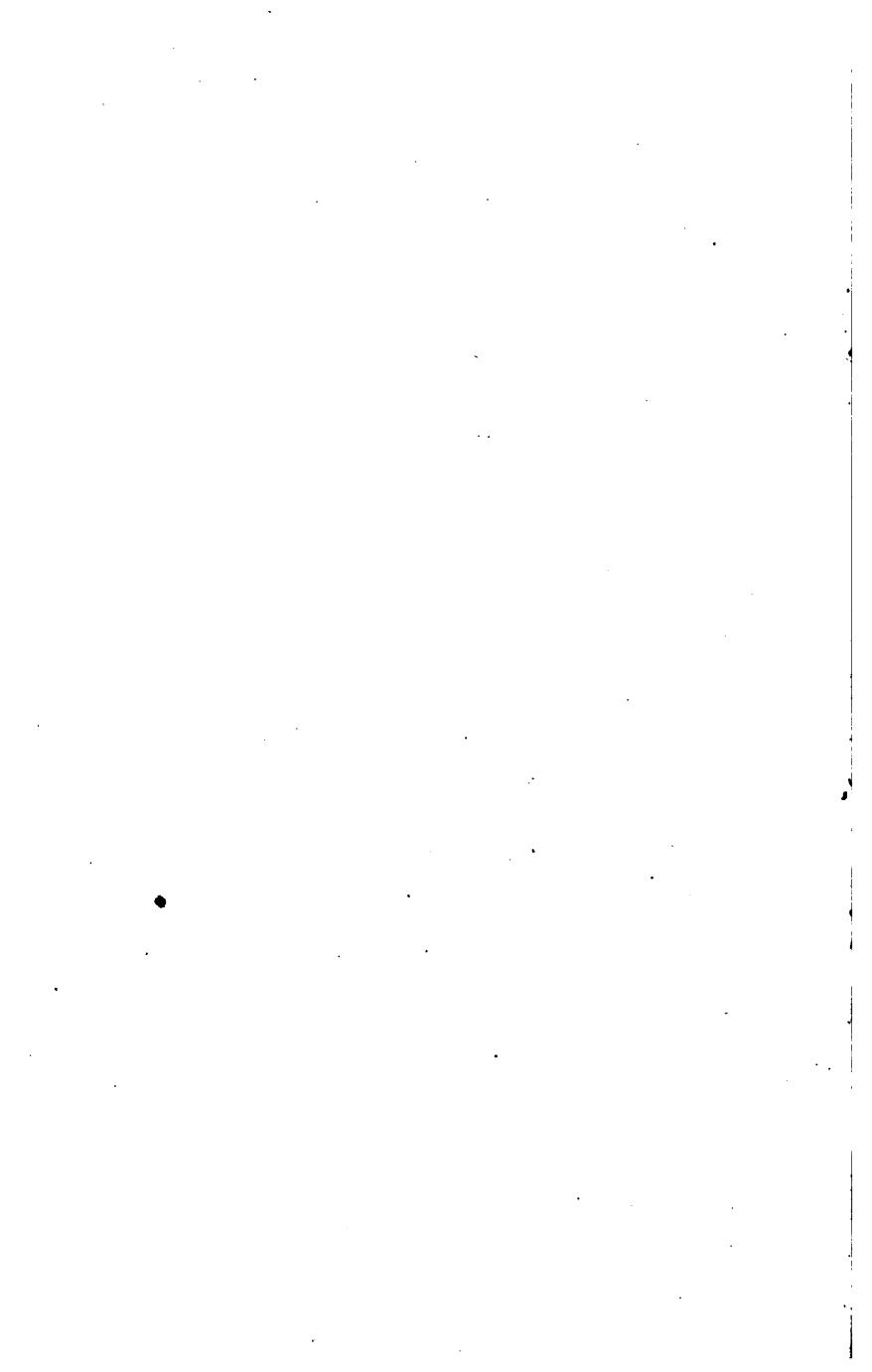
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D E L I S L E.

VOL. II.

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DE LISLE;

OR,

THE DISTRUSTFUL MAN.

"His affections had received a chill they could not for some time recover, but this was not all—the weeds of prejudice, mistrust, and suspicion, sprang up in his young breast with baleful vigour."

VOL. I. CHAP. XII.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DE LISLE.

CHAPTER I.

A CROWD of feelings seemed hurrying athwart the contracted brow of Seymour, like flying clouds across a threatening sky. In the multitude of thoughts and recollections that presented themselves, he appeared at a loss to choose what were fitting to give utterance to. At last, making an effort to rally his spirits, he proceeded in a low, oppressed tone, which varied only to more piercing accents as he approached the bitter moment of his bereavement.

“We received the day after our marriage an account of the gaining of one of Eugénie’s causes. The agent who waited upon her to present the papers substantiating one of her claims, also brought her some money. Young

as she was, she had seen poverty too near not to know the value of wealth ; and, I confess, I expected from her animated nature more lively expressions of joy and surprise at her prosperity. She received the man with her usual grace and courtesy, omitted none of those conciliating phrases with which her language abounds, and which no one ever selected with more good taste and feeling ; but the fact did not occupy her for a moment, and she gave me the money to put by, without even counting it. I asked if she would not like to dedicate some part of it to the Martignis ?

“ ‘ It will be right for you,’ she said, ‘ but not for me—affection cannot be paid for, and I would not wound my good foster-mother by offering her money. She is rather affluent for a person in her circumstances, and will be more flattered by our remembrance, and frequent but trifling pledges of it, than by a pompous present at parting.’ We went, however, to La Rochelle to purchase such articles of furniture as Eugénie knew would be welcome to the owner of the Castle, towards whom she felt less delicacy, and, caring less for, was more anxious to remunerate.

“ The day for sailing was fixed ; we went on board to see that every thing my wife fancied

had been placed in the passengers' cabin, in which I had spent so many hours of monotony, which I vainly thought I should never feel again. When the boat put us on shore, we walked along by the sea-side, calculating the time that it would take us to reach England. The ship was bound for the Hague, but was to touch at the first Dutch port, from whence we were to proceed home. The air was extremely heavy, the sky lowering, and the distant thunder, that growled and murmured almost without intermission, warned us to shorten our walk. A dreadful hurricane arose in the night, and Eugénie listened to it with thankfulness that we were yet on land. Alas! danger is every where, and not the less formidable when it lurks unseen; my poor Eugénie thought herself secure in my arms, and it was there that death struck her! At breakfast, I thought she was pale, but Dame Martigni, to whom I remarked it, looked fondly at her, and said, 'she did not wish to see a fairer or a happier face.'

"The storm had subsided, and doubtful whether or not we should be summoned on board, we remained stationary, watching the weather, conversing, or reading. At last, Eugénie begged me to desist; she complained of a

head-ache, which prevented her attending. I thought it might be the effect of the thunder, and wished her to sleep. She lay down on the sofa and reclined her head upon me, but she was restless, and the strong pulsations of her heart terrified me. In a few minutes she started up suddenly, and, uttering a faint moan, fell at my feet. She had placed her hand upon her heart, and when I raised her, blood was streaming from her mouth; there was yet a light in her eye, a convulsive motion in her limbs; they passed away, and all was still and lifeless!

“ I called aloud, and, alarmed at the cry, the Martignis rushed into the room. Terror and grief were loudly expressed, as I have since remembered; *then*, I heard it not, I saw not the crowds that pressed into the room, I answered not their eager inquiries, I felt only unutterable anguish, united to a desperate determination still to doubt my fate. I tried a thousand remedies, I bore her into the air, I gazed at her till I thought her lips moved. I looked up in agony and almost expected a miracle in my behalf:—at last she grew cold in my grasp, she returned not the feeblest pressure to my passionate caresses—*then* I knew that she was dead, and my madness turned to stupor!

“I laid her down upon the grass, I flung myself beside her, I thought I would take one farewell kiss and sleep in peace. Some drops of blood yet hung on her cold and colourless lip. Hubert, there is no future time in which I shall not feel upon my lips the chill, damp touch that carried death to my heart. I sank beneath it then, and when I recovered I was alone in my cabin. The darkness was profound, the wind sighed, the waves moaned, and I found that the ship was bearing me rapidly from all that remained of Eugénie. I thought it barbarous. I raved, expostulated, lamented—asked to be sent back in the boat, for we had not sailed many hours, but my Dutch captain heard me unmoved, and mildly replied,

“ ‘Young man, you ought to be home; you will one day thank me for not having deserted you. You should not give up the living for the dead!’ Alas! I knew that she was dead, but it was ferocious to tell me so!”

De Lisle now, in a broken voice, interrupted his friend, imploring him to recall no longer events so disastrous.

“My grief,” said Lionel steadily, “is no more to-day than it was yesterday,—than it will

be to-morrow. That which is ever present, has not to be recalled ; but I ought to spare your kind heart, and I will do so."

"You know that I found my father dead, my youngest brother ill, the other absent, and my sister decided to take the veil. I said, to deter her, only what I thought it my duty to say, for in truth I envied her faith, and would gladly have believed there was any merit in a life of peace and seclusion. Even in the world, however, I have found repose; and, in the hope of being useful to others, consolation. I cannot be what I was, but you can witness that I am neither gloomy nor captious. Since it is the will of Heaven that I should live, it is expected of me that I should do my master's work, and gladly will I strive to do it, since, like Mercy, 'it is twice blessed.' You know that I am not indifferent to my friends, or incapable of receiving comfort, and feeling gratitude to them; and you know now, that the blandishments of woman have lost their charm to me, and that all I felt so intensely for Eugénie lies buried in her grave."

Seymour had concluded; he held out his hand to his friend, and bade him good-night with his usual equanimity. His serenity seemed no

effort, and his hand was steady as his eye. The blow had spent its force, and, though the heart was still scarred, the spirit had revived. But the shock was new to De Lisle, and he felt ashamed of having ever uttered a complaint in the presence of Lionel. The more he considered of what he had heard, the less could he understand how his friend, with such a weight at heart, could bend to commonplace people, and take his share in every-day pursuits. He not only steered his even course with a firm hand, but he turned not away from whatever was beautiful or attractive.

That he was much changed was true, but it was equally true that he was not unhappy—nay, Hubert felt persuaded, that he had more enjoyment of existence than many, far more than he himself. That his benevolent spirit, affectionate temper, and ardent desire to benefit mankind, were so many sources of comfort, Hubert was ready to acknowledge; but his religion he rather considered as a wild and beautiful enthusiasm, dangerous in any mind less powerful, than as the seal affixed to a noble and upright character: to which it lent majesty, and on which it showered sublime consolation. Such as he was, De Lisle looked up to him with af-

fectionate admiration; and loved, for his sake, the piety he comprehended so little.

His opinion of others was nowise improved in consequence of his sentiments for Seymour, for it was evident that others were not like him. Neither did the benevolence of his friend increase his own; for he attributed it not to any conviction of his judgment, but partly to a happy disposition, independent of his reason, that showed him the bright side of every thing, and partly to his established principle, that indulgence was a duty. "And how," thought De Lisle, "can we be indulgent to man if we see him as he is? Illusion is necessary in such a system, and if Lionel finds comfort in so amiable an illusion, long may he enjoy it."

Shortly after, the English party tore themselves from Granada, and, as if loath to separate, remained at Malaga, with no definite object in view. As they approached the coast, the sea air seemed to revive Lady Linden, and, in their numerous expeditions on the water, her increased spirits and reviving colour reminded Lionel of what she was before her ill-assorted marriage. The climate was delicious, and the evening breeze reached the English party, as they sailed slowly backwards and forwards,

laden with the strong perfume of the orange-flower, and bearing to them the joyous tones of the peasantry, who at that hour were usually dancing in the open air to the sound of the guitar, the very monotony of which, falling at measured intervals on the ear, was soothing and agreeable. Lady Linden herself was sometimes tempted to wake the Spanish echo with an English song, and Henry Seymour readily joined her. His brother declined every invitation to share in their amusement. In vain De Lisle rallied him, Lord Linden urged, and his wife mentioned the songs she had heard him sing: Lionel had forgotten all he once knew, and was little disposed to learn any new ones.

"I am afraid," said Lord Linden, one day when the conversation had taken this turn, "that you are capricious in your tastes, since you *once* liked singing."

"Perhaps I am," said Lionel, without noticing the sarcastic tone of the Peer, "but hardly in this instance. I once liked singing, and I like it still: it was never more than a simple taste,—never a passion!"

"But you sang yourself?"

"Yes, but I never liked it. Overflowing spirits relieve themselves by motion, bustle, and

noise of all sorts. I hummed an air as it came into my head, and all the young ladies of my acquaintance immediately asked me to sing with them. I could not refuse young ladies, you know; and besides, by that means I gained many a pleasant lounge and many an agreeable acquaintance."

"Then why not continue?"

"Because these things are no longer in season."

"Are you so much older than I," asked Lady Linden, "or do you think it absurd in me to follow still so juvenile a pursuit?"

"Far from it. You like singing, and I see no merit in giving up a harmless enjoyment, more particularly when it is of a nature to give pleasure to others. Besides, is it not the province of women to adorn virtue by every possible grace and accomplishment? The more attractive you are, the more lustre you cast on all that is excellent. It is a sin against morality for a good person to be austere and repulsive."

"And who is good?" asked the young Peeress, with a troubled air and downcast look.

"Who, indeed!" replied Seymour, "if we measure goodness by those scales that have

been given us? Weighed in that balance, we shall all be found wanting. But good comparatively—good from the simple absence of evil, and the ardent admiration of excellence—good enough, for instance, to enjoy the holy stillness of the scene before us, and to feel the Spirit that ruleth all things move on the face of the waters, and give to the heart of man an earnest of that peace he cannot find here—just so far 'tis surely neither rare nor difficult to be good.”

“I would I could think so!” said Lady Linden earnestly; “but I cannot persuade myself that these clear moonbeams have the power to make me better or holier. I know that I am calmer, more contented; but while my senses are soothed, my heart is untouched. As the light dances on the surface of the ocean, but penetrates not to the coral caves that lie concealed in its deep cold bosom, so do the hope and piety you connect with our present situation glance upon my mind, soothing it as it passes over, but neither improving nor exhilarating it.”

“Where then lies the fault, Lady Linden? Not in the scene; for with what purity is it not fraught—with what gratitude should it not inspire us! How much is there here of mere

beauty ! How much is there bounteously lavished solely to contribute to our enjoyment ! Is it nothing to feel that we are thus the continual object of Divine protection and boundless benevolence ? and shall He yet find in our thankless hearts one thought that purity cannot sanction, one wish that is not in unison with His known law ?”

Lady Linden had listened, with her eyes riveted on the speaker, as if her ear drank the sound of which it was enamoured. A few tears gathered slowly in her dove-like eyes, and gently, unconsciously, and slowly rolled over her pale cheek. When Seymour ceased speaking she bowed her head upon her breast, and he felt that her spirit too had bowed to the truth.

He remained silent ; but in the uplifted eye, that sought with joy and confidence the starry canopy above him, could be traced the benevolent pleasure he experienced at communicating a portion of his own serene enjoyment to one who seemed dead to emotions of gladness. Lord Linden gazed upon the scene before him with a sort of troubled curiosity, and laboured with doubting, distrustful feelings to comprehend what was beyond the limits of his mind. De Lisle saw it all, and sighed as the feeble wish

struggled at his heart, that he, too, could be religious. Henry and Major Linden, taken up with their own conversation, knew no more what was passing around them than if they had not been there. There are some people who see any thing better than what is under their eye, and like every thing better than what is within their reach ; and to this class, somewhat modified perhaps, these young men belonged.

The English party had but one more day to spend together, and they determined to lose none of it. Fatigued with the exertions of the morning, Lady Linden sat partly reclined on the sofa, her thoughts fixed on the approaching separation, and the little prospect of her ever again meeting with Lionel. She fancied herself declining rapidly, and all the bitterness of death was to her comprised in the moment of hearing his last farewell. But the inward pang was unbetrayed. She lay motionless, every feature still and quiet, every tone calm and measured. As the evening wore away, her words were fewer, her voice feebler ; and Seymour felt that there was cruelty in delaying a separation that she could not bear to look steadily in the face.

“ I am afraid,” he said, in rather an under

tone, though it was one of which the quick ear of Lord Linden lost not a single accent, "that you will envy me this day month. I shall then hope to see your children. You know they are in my neighbourhood."

"You are very good,"—Lady Linden hesitated ;—"but why should I tax your kindness? My children are too young to amuse any one, and, for some time to come, can interest only mothers."

"I do not affect to care for children as play-things, but it is impossible to wish well to the human race, without feeling a keen interest in creatures who bear the seed within them of the excellencies or the follies of future years. I like to mark the dawning of perceptions beyond their age ; the intuitive feelings that education and circumstances will crush or invigorate. As a general study, this has great attraction for me—to a mother of more sensibility than religious confidence, I can fancy its being almost too painful. Seeing deeper into the character, that a stranger does but glance at, hoping more anxiously, fearing more frequently, she must often doubt the wisdom of her most arduous exertions in their favour. It is an awful trust, but doubtless *you* can tell to what animated feelings it gives rise."

There was a slight indication of agitation in the manner and countenance of Lady Linden: it passed away, and she answered meekly—"I will not usurp your esteem—I believe, the idea that I could not long perform my duties by my children has induced me to neglect them altogether. They are very young, and I did not think I was injuring them."

"They are so young," rejoined Lionel eagerly, "that now is the time to begin; and when you return to England, the most interesting of all occupations awaits you."

Lady Linden smiled, shook her head, and repeated with marked emphasis, "Ay, *when* I return!"

"Why indulge such an idea, Lady Linden? It is most probably erroneous, it is most undoubtedly unfortunate, for it palsies both your feelings and your faculties. We know nothing of life and death; and I, who stand before you now in full force and vigour, may drop suddenly into that abyss, which must eventually swallow us all up. We know not where our career may terminate, but we all know what daily work is given us, and that we may not neglect performing it, though we may fancy its termination nearer than it is."

Lady Linden had not listened to the last

phrase, and she betrayed her inattention by the abrupt question—"Has life no charm for you, that you speak so coolly of its cessation?"

"I do not," answered Seymour, "suffer myself to think whether it is pleasant or laborious. I know that with respect to its continuation I have no voice, and I know that it is good for me that I have not. Experience proves the first fact, and faith the second; I am accordingly free from anxiety upon the subject. Hope and fear are offsprings of doubt, but this is a matter of knowledge and conviction."

"And is there none you would regret in this world?" asked the lady with emotion.

"I regret those I have lost as long as I am separated from them," replied Lionel; "those I should leave behind, and who must one day follow me, are surely not legitimate objects of regret. If I had children it might be otherwise. I might struggle to live for them, for it is hard to replace a parent."

Tears sprang to the eyes of the young mother. "I am well reprovèd," she said, after a pause, "but I too will endeavour to live."

"A fair promise!" cried Seymour gaily, "may it be as fairly kept! and now, my gentle, placable friend, we must bid you adieu.

We have of late owed so much of our enjoyment to your society, that we shall find it hard to do without it ; but Hope was at the bottom even of Pandora's box ; we will cherish it, and expect to meet again as soon as your health can stand our northern air."

Mechanically the whole party had arisen as Seymour moved, and each took leave of the lady, her husband, and brother. Lady L—— accompanied De Lisle a few steps towards the door, and bowed and smiled to his parting compliments, but she heard them not ; her whole soul was with Lionel. " Shall I see him no more ? Will he not say another word ? " thought she. As he reached the threshold he turned ; he looked at her ; he even smiled. She had need of that calm and friendly smile. No words could so well have shown the folly of her agitation. It sobered her at once ; she turned away, and could not repress a rising sigh. It seemed as if his departure had dissipated some dear and fondly cherished illusion ; yet was the spell not roughly broken, but gently dissolved, and memory loved to linger on the images that fancy had so sweetly painted.

CHAPTER II.

THE travellers had time to make Isabella only a hasty visit, for Lionel's presence was required in England, and Henry was so well as to abandon all idea of wintering in France, as he had at first intended. Their sister had not the leisure to regret seeing so little of them. The Lady Abbess was dying, and cabals to succeed her went on as actively within the four walls of a convent, as ever were known in the world for the attainment of objects of apparently more consequence. Besides the ordinary inquietude and intrigues on similar occasions, a dissension existed between the sisterhood and the bishop of their diocese, both claiming the right of election. Fatigued with the constant repetition of the same pretensions and arguments, Isabella would gladly have talked to her brothers of something else ; but they, to whom

the subject was new, were curious as to the probable termination of the dispute, and eagerly inquired if she could guess the person most likely to meet the wishes of all parties. Isabella named a Biscayan lady.

“And is she a friend of yours?” asked De Lisle.

“On the contrary.”

“Then she will not have your vote?”

“Pardon me, she is intitled to it, for she is the most worthy to succeed.”

“I hope,” said Henry anxiously, “the death of the Abbess will not be a great loss to you?”

“I cannot deny that it will be a great one. She loved my mother; and though the sentiment would have been choked up with other matters had she lived in the world, as it was, associated with her earliest and brightest days, it could not well fade from her memory. The Abbess is a sort of link between my past life and my present. That broken, I shall be alone in a land of strangers. In losing her, I shall also regret the solid advantages of being an efficient, almost an independent person. Do not, however, let your rapid imagination take fire, my dear Henry; I shall not be a victim. Within the limits of the cloister there is little to desire,

and, well-regulated and governed as this house is, less to fear. I shall cease to be favoured, but am little likely to be oppressed."

Isabella sought in vain to cheer her brothers; they quitted the convent sad and dispirited, fearing for her a thousand ills she disdained to anticipate for herself. They had hardly crossed the frontiers, when at a deplorable hovel, where the want of horses obliged the English travellers to delay a while, they were overtaken by a Spanish youth. He presented a letter to De Lisle: it was from Isabella.

"I recommend," said she, "to your protection the bearer, who will probably have grown out of your knowledge. He is the same deaf and dumb lad who was our agent in the escape of Donna Theodora. I have discovered that his infirmity was feigned, and I have therefore advised him to seek employment without the convent walls. You were seeking a servant when we parted, or I should not have encumbered you with my *protégé*. The Abbess died not an hour since, and we proceed by daybreak to the election of her successor. My brothers may write to me through the new Abbess. It is most probable that their letters will reach me. If they could take the trouble of writing in

Spanish, I should be more certain ; for we think *here* that English is a strange heretical language."

"What companions," thought De Lisle, "for the liberal, high-minded Isabella Seymour ! And yet, perhaps, I only think her liberal when compared with them."

The young Biscayan was summoned, and appeared much delighted with the prospect of serving De Lisle, who hinted to him that his old habits of silence would be a very particular recommendation, at the same time that neither he nor his companions could refrain from asking the motive for his playing a part that could profit him so little.

"It was not altogether assumed," answered the Biscayan, speaking slow and with difficulty. "I was born tonguetied, and, being one of a large family, it suited my parents to call me deaf also. By this artifice, Father Francis was induced to take charge of me. Of course, my supposed deafness rendered my intelligence and comprehension much more marvellous, and I could not pull down the edifice of my own renown. An accident restored my speech, but nearly proved fatal to my life. I was climbing a high cliff, and disturbed a bird on its nest :

it flew past me unexpectedly, and startled me so much, that I let go my hold, and fell a very considerable distance. I got up, bruised and bloody, with my mouth full of dirt and pebbles : it was much cut, inside and out, but from that time I found I could speak, though uncomfortably to myself, and probably unpleasantly to my hearers."

De Lisle and the Seymours were of opinion that these accidental cuts had not been exactly in the right place, and that an operation somewhat more skilful might restore the organs entirely. The youth, though content to make but little use of his tongue, was rejoiced to hear he might have the power to do so when it suited him ; and recommending the cavaliers to the protection of every saint he had ever heard Father Francis name, he respectfully took his leave.

The weather had been so sultry hitherto, that the travellers could not persuade themselves that summer was over. A sudden change in the climate almost made them regret the fluctuating weather in England, where winter can never be said to take one by surprise, perhaps because one feels there that it is never far distant. They hastened on to Paris, chilled

and disappointed. After a rapid survey of what most deserved attention in that highly ornamented capital, they proposed crossing the Channel; where, true to prejudice and habit, they expected the warmth and cheerfulness from a coal fire, which they would not see or feel in one of wood.

While the necessary preparations were making for their departure, the Seine suddenly froze over, and the gay and beautiful scene that was now daily exhibited proved attractive enough to the three Englishmen to detain them a few days longer in Paris. They were all good skaiters; but Lionel, who loved the exercise which recalled the reckless hours of his earliest youth, much excelled both his brother and Hubert. They made parties on the ice; they performed a variety of figures, they forgot not their national mania for betting, even in a country where its inhabitants require not the unnatural excitement: happy in being able to find an interest in every thing, they do not want to be lashed into amusement.

The frost had continued for above three weeks, and was expected to last much longer, when the weather was so impertinent as to give the lie to, philosophers by breaking up almost

suddenly. The ice continued to present a solid footing to the adventurers, but its sides were deemed insecure, and the number of skaiters was much diminished. There was a bet pending among the Englishmen and some of their intimates, upon two Poles, who had undertaken to perform on the ice a dance very common in their country, but which was rather a novelty on the banks of the Seine. The performers were urged to give up the thing, the weather having changed so much ; but, young and heedless, they seemed to think the various wagers of more consequence than their lives, and faithfully performed their engagement.

One of them, willing to avoid an unsound part, destroyed in some measure the grace of the figure by making an abrupt angle. When the applause had subsided with which the exhibition was greeted, and the crowd had in some measure dispersed, Henry Seymour, trusting to the lightness of his figure, chose to skait beyond the line to which the Poles had confined themselves. The ice appeared firm ; and, bolder from success, Henry took a yet wider sweep. It seemed as if the whole ponderous mass waited but the turn of a straw to burst asunder : it gave way at once, and De Lisle saw from the

bank where he was standing, the sudden plunge of several persons ; but, till the distant cry of Lionel smote his ear, he knew not that Henry was one of the victims. He looked up, and before he had time for thought or motion, Lionel had passed him with the swiftness of an arrow, and plunged at once into the chasm where Henry had disappeared. Hubert's first impulse was to veil his eyes from a sight so horrid as the instant destruction of his friends ; his next was to rush forward and make one desperate struggle to save them. When he reached the spot, his heart leaped at the sight of Lionel apparently uninjured, holding fast by one hand to an edge of ice, to prevent being carried beneath it, while with the other he grasped the floating and evidently insensible body of his brother. With so much to excite him, De Lisle neither wanted for energy nor resolution. The spectators, touched by his evident agony, lent him their active assistance, and the Seymours were extricated from the ice with astonishing celerity.

When Lionel reached the shore, however, he was as little able to sustain himself as was the inanimate Henry, and De Lisle followed them borne on flat pieces of wood to their lodging,

whither a medical man, who was present at the accident, recommended their being conveyed, after having tried a few of the simplest remedies to revive Henry, without effect, on the spot.

An immense concourse of persons followed to the apartment where the brothers were deposited, unheeded by De Lisle, who thought of nothing but his friends, saw nothing but the countenance of the medical man, whom he dreaded to question, yet whose opinion he longed to divine. Exhaustion and agitation had for a moment overpowered Lionel, but his senses returned almost at the moment his bearers placed him on the couch, and looking anxiously round, his eye rested on the ghastly face of his brother.

He remained motionless for a few minutes, as if to collect and ascertain his own strength ; then grasping De Lisle's arm, he arose and bent in silence over the body. He had seen death in too many shapes to mistake him now, and his friend, who watched his features, saw by the faint struggle that passed over them, and the repose of hopelessness that succeeded, that another of the ties that yet bound him to earth had been burst asunder. The apartment was quite full ; and the many faces that rose one above

the other, expressive either of painful curiosity or a feeling of sympathy, might have furnished many a characteristic group to a painter.

The awful silence that reigned through the whole, was not its least remarkable feature: a few women wept, some crossed themselves, but emotion of every sort was noiseless. The first sound that broke the trance, was the abrupt entrance of Hubert's Biscayan attendant. He had heard of some accident befallen the Seymours, but knew not what, till, on entering the room and forcing his way through the crowd, he suddenly espied the corpse of his favourite. With a loud shout he sprang forward, and cast himself on the body, eagerly grasping its hands, and seeking for one lingering pulse at the heart that was at rest for ever. The spell that had bound up the multitude gave way at once, and all clamorously bewailed over the dead, or advised the living.

There was a priest among them who now strove with some effect to calm and disperse the crowd—he then mildly addressed De Lisle, entreating him not to suffer his friend, if he wished to save him, to remain standing beside the corpse with his wet and almost frozen gar-

ments still clinging to him. Awakened to a new sort of dread, Hubert implored Lionel to take some care of himself. If Seymour scarce appeared to hear him, at least he made no opposition to his request; but, ere he followed the impulse of his arm, he placed his hand on the cold white forehead of his youthful brother, and in the low, almost supernatural tone of one who has for the moment lost sight of earth and earthly things, he slowly ejaculated, "Father! it was a pure heart, and such shall see Thee!" He had borne the conviction of his brother's death unshrinkingly, but he could not so soon bear to speak of him as gone; and the few tears that fell slowly over cheeks nearly as colourless as those of the dead who lay before him, were the first though unconscious tribute to brotherly love.

Hubert could ill endure the loss of his amiable companion; but the anguish of Lionel—the noble, the high-minded, the pious,—wrung his heart almost to bursting, and in the bitterness of his spirit the thought occurred: "These then are the men that suffer, while the unrighteous and the heartless prosper."

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CHAPTER III.

WHEN Seymour had quitted the spot where his soul yet lingered, he opposed none of Hubert's wishes with respect to himself, but having got into bed and taken what was offered him, he remained so still that it was hoped he slept. De Lisle had continued to watch beside him for nearly two hours, when Lionel held out his hand, and he was shocked to find it burning, parched, and tremulous.

"Do you feel feverish?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes," answered Lionel, in his usual quiet tone, "and it is therefore I speak to you now before the fever increases so as to confound my ideas. My brother Frank is abroad, and to you, therefore, I must look to act a brother's part. Henry can be taken without much difficulty to the family vault, and be buried with our ancestors—so much to satisfy the customs and the

pride of man ; and now to satisfy an individual feeling of my own, quite as absurd as theirs, but yet (I confess the weakness) most soothing to me at this hour—lay *me*, my friend, beside Eugénie.”

De Lisle hoped that he was already delirious, and that no danger existed for his life, but in his own troubled brain. After some farther conversation, he was forced to give up the idea, and listen with a bewildered and aching consciousness to the desires and regulations of his friend. They were simple and explicit ; and when every thing had been done that could save others trouble, he turned to subjects more congenial to his temper and cast of mind. The fever, as he expected, rose rapidly ; and conscious of the fact, he ceased to converse until he lost all self-control. Yet even then his words need not have been disavowed in moments of recollection. The ravings of Lionel spoke not of wounded pride, blasted ambition, or disappointed passion. His exhortations to the brother who needed them no longer, his few sentences of boundless tenderness to the wife he was about to join, were affecting to those who knew that the beings with whom his soul communed, were beyond the reach of his care or his love ; but

the emotion they inspired was neither bitter nor terrifying. The thoughts of Seymour were too pure to be painful, and their expression excited tears that were more soothing than distressing.

He continued so long in a fluctuating state, and there was at one period so much hope entertained of his ultimate recovery, that De Lisle sent over the body of Henry to England for interment. Could he have left Lionel, he would have accompanied it ; but that being impossible, he was anxious that, should his friend recover, the first object that met his eyes should not be the coffin of his brother. That recovery indeed soon became problematic, and at last all idea of it was given up. The fever was no sooner combated in one way than it broke out in another. Consumed and worn out by it, he ceased to have even lucid intervals. He was never apparently quite unconscious of De Lisle's presence ; for though he did not address him by name, he took more readily what he offered, and sometimes feebly pressed the hand that so often supported him.

On the morning of his death, Hubert, exhausted by long vigils, had rested his head against his bed as he sat beside it, and yielded to a momentary stupor. But the sleep of the

anxious is not repose, and is easily broken. Hubert's was dissolved by a cold touch on his cheek—he looked up—Lionel had drawn his feeble fingers over his sleeping face, in a gentle caressing manner, and smiled as he met his troubled glance. The smile was very beautiful, and as it gradually vanished, it left behind a trace of affection and peace. He gazed fixedly at him for a moment more, then closed his eyes, and a faint struggling breath betrayed that he had taken his last farewell. De Lisle knew that all was over, yet did he remain motionless, dreading to confirm that awful fiat from which is no appeal.

It was not till the intelligence had been conveyed and repeated to him a thousand times—it was not till the shroud had actually enfolded the noble form of the departed, that De Lisle discovered how steadfastly to the last he had looked for his recovery. He had repeated with others, “there is no hope ;” but there was a corner of his heart which cherished it still, which looked for a miracle, which would have believed any thing sooner than the loss of one so dearly prized. The blow came, therefore, upon him like the swift vengeance of an offended Deity: he fell beneath it prostrate and power-

less, but not resigned. It was might against which it was vain for feebleness to struggle ; but he was without consolation. He daily, indeed, said to himself, " It is better as it is—the world was not worthy of him, and had ceased to give him pleasure—why would my selfish spirit have chained him here ?" But natural arguments, unaided by spiritual ones, serve little to reconcile us to calamity. Philosophy is good where the heart is not touched—it may conceal the pang, but a mightier balm is wanted to subdue it.

There was some little comfort in executing with religious exactness every desire of the deceased. De Lisle found himself much indebted to a stranger for smoothing the difficulties in the way of placing Seymour beside his wife. As a heretic, this was not easy to effect. He could follow the funeral procession to La Rochelle ; but when there, could not ensure compliance with his request from the simple and probably rigid country priest.

" We must certify," said the stranger, " that he died a Catholic ; and this certificate, properly attested, will remove the scruples you might have to contend with. Of course you will order masses for the repose of his soul."

"I will do," replied Hubert, "whatever is required, that money can do ; but I would rather not certify a falsehood. He was *not* a Catholic, and I cannot therefore assert or insinuate that he was."

The stranger smiled. "Pardon me, young man ; but are you quite sure you know in what Catholicism consists ? I understand he was a religious, serious person. Have you so frequently discussed with him your schismatic opinions, that you could swear to his having adopted them all ? Do you know what he thought of the real presence, of the duty of confession, and of the other more trifling differences in our faith ? for with the Pope's supremacy I reckon the clergy alone have to do. Who, in our days, thinks that what is manifestly wrong can be made right by the voice of a priest ?"

"Many, I rather think," replied Hubert ; "but that, at present, it is needless to discuss. To your other questions I can only say, that I never did hear Seymour give a direct opinion on those subjects ; but my general impression certainly is, that he was unfavourable to your faith. A mind like his aspired at once to the Divinity, and could not brook the many inter-

mediate agents you have placed between God and man."

"It may be so—yet here we have only your impression, not your knowledge:—now facts may speak against your impression. Here is a foreigner who dies of a malady that admits not of religious preparation—he is found to have worn continually a small female picture, to which is affixed a cross—his last wish is, that it may be buried with him, and that he himself may rest on Catholic ground. It is easy so to represent this to any liberal priest, that after administering extreme unction to the body, he may give a certificate that will answer your purpose."

"By a *liberal* priest, I suppose, you mean one who has no religion at all?"

"Truly," said the stranger, with a shrug, "I have not your passion for investigating men's private sentiments. Their public profession is enough for me."

"And in this case must be enough for me also," said Hubert; and with a grateful expression or two to the stranger, he gladly availed himself of his kindness.

The pension that was allowed by Lionel to his wife's old nurse, was ordered to be conti-

nued ; and if De Lisle had not met with the memorandum on the subject, he would have continued it himself, but the old dame refused to accept it. "I took it from *her* husband," said she with tears, "for I could not wound him ; but I do not want it, and will on no account receive it from you, of whom neither Mademoiselle St. Clair nor I know any thing ; or from a brother of the noble Seymour's, whom we never beheld, and who may any day be fighting against us."

De Lisle's attempts at persuasion all proved abortive—she was resolute, and even sulky ; and he soon found the money she had hitherto received, had been principally spent in masses for the orphan Eugénie.

All those who remembered the romantic story of the shipwrecked Englishman, flocked to his funeral, and the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, though somewhat shorn of their splendour in that remote province, were not without their effect on Hubert. He listened at dead of night to the slowly chaunted requiem, and confessed, that though it could avail little to the dead, it was not always unprofitable to the living. Religious ceremonies seem to keep up some connexion with the departed ; and for the first

time in his life he regretted that he was not more religious.

“Lionel needed not this pageantry,” thought he as he leaned over his grave; “and Henry would have been grateful to it for assimilating with his own feelings; why have I alone a cold and withered heart, which rejoices not in the world, yet cannot feel the light beyond it?”

Oppressed by musings such as these, he tore himself from the lowly spot sacred to the memories of Eugénie and Lionel, and, having paid a visit of civility and acknowledgment to the priest, prepared to depart. To England, however, he would not yet go; for he knew not how to announce to Isabella her heavy losses, otherwise than by soliciting an interview. It was a dreary season for such a journey; but few things stopped De Lisle when once he had an object in view. He was glad, too, to have some excuse for deferring his return to the busy haunts of men; he knew that time would restore him to his usual state, but at that moment he had neither the wish nor the power to struggle with the heavy clouds of grief that had gathered around him and settled on a spirit at no period gay and buoyant. He thought the feelings of Isabella, calm and well regulated as they were,

would hardly stand such a shock, and he mourned over her as though he loved her; for he wanted something to mourn over, and some apology to himself for indulging the violence of sorrow.

When he stood at the convent gates, his heart died within him, and he had scarce power to give utterance to his request. It was denied him: he might at some other hour solicit an interview with the lady abbess, but the English nun saw no one.

“It is well,” thought De Lisle, as he turned slowly away; “these high and cumbrous walls shut out the sound of mirth,—why then should the voice of woe be suffered to penetrate them?”

Again, however, he presented himself, and this time the abbess deigned to appear. He stated the purport of his coming; and though she who heard him, had seen many a haggard cheek and quivering lip before, grief, it may be, in her eyes, was more touching in the young and beautiful, for she was evidently affected by his manner. She refused, however, to let him see Isabella.

“There is no reason,” she said, “for breaking through my rules; for what can you tell

her more than you have told me, and which I can repeat in a way more suited to the ears of a pious maiden who is vowed to solitude and Heaven?"

"Have I said aught," asked De Lisle, in an accent of apology, "the most pious might not hear?"

"I know you did not mean it, young man, but the worldling cannot speak like the nun. You lament over yourself because your friends are lost to you in this world. To their sister they have been lost from the hour she passed these portals. It is not their natural, but their spiritual death she will mourn. She loses nothing, for she had left them before they were called upon to leave her; but they who lose, we fear, their own souls, (dying in that accursed faith,) are objects of compassion, not to be thought of without horror."

Hubert absolutely started: to doubt of the salvation of Henry, was absurd to him; but of that of Lionel! it was profanation! His eye kindled, his pale cheek burnt—he thought of the gentle forbearance of his friend, of the benevolent compassion with which he would have listened to what excited such keen ire—the

smouldering fire was extinct, quenched in tears, that he concealed by casting his eyes to the ground.

The abbess saw the heavy overcharged lid, and her heart smote her for the pain she had given ; but to retract was impossible. She soothed him, however, by expressions of kindness : she suffered him to write in her presence with a pencil to Isabella, stipulating that it should be in Spanish. She even acceded to his request of receiving him again on the following day to inform him of any thing Isabella might wish communicated. With the morning, however, came a note, delivered by his old acquaintance Father Francis. It was as follows :

“ Depart, young man, in peace ! I cannot see you again ; it is too painful. The sister of your friends is less detached from the world than I had hoped from her quiet cheerful demeanour ; she fainted at the unexpected news. She looks as usual to-day, and desires you to convey her earnest wishes to the sole survivor of her family, that he may emulate the conduct of his elder brother, and the faith of his sainted mother. Stranger, adieu ! I will pray for your

conversion, but come not again to the walls of Santa Maria."

To this formal dismissal, De Lisle had nothing to object. He saw that the wary abbess feared the nature of his regard for the nun.

"These cloistered saints," he said to himself, as he mounted his mule, "think but of one sort of affection, and deem that invariably criminal. They little know my regard for Isabella has no warmth in itself, and is but like the rays from a setting sun reflected on a barren waste: those withdrawn, it glows no longer with borrowed lustre. And now for England!"

CHAPTER IV.

SLOWLY as Hubert moved, and little as he wished to attain the end of his journey, he did reach it at last. Captain Seymour was not in England, and nothing therefore delayed his arrival at the paternal mansion, where he was received by his father with tears, and by his mother with pride. Sir Francis was growing feeble, and feared at one time he might not have lived to welcome his son's return. No such feelings disturbed the serenity of Lady De Lisle, who, supposing Hubert might return any day, had not suffered from his absence, and now hailed him with joyful exultation, as she marked the improvement time had made in his person and manner.

It was difficult, indeed, to be more striking, and though the beholder was not always sure he liked the countenance, or felt attracted by

the manner, there was a fascination in both, that perpetually aroused attention, and inspired the wish to please him before the point was by any means decided how far he had pleased them. His apparent carelessness of the impression he made, was admired by some, and resented by others, but it had its weight with all.

The return of any other person in his situation would have been little more than a nine days' wonder, and after every neighbour had seen him, and given the eagerly sought for opinion, of whether he looked browner or fairer, colder or more gracious than when he left them, he might have been dismissed for some newer topic, and by all but prudent mammas next to forgotten. But this could not occur to one so little disposed to gratify the curiosity of the whole county, by appearing in public one moment sooner than he could help it. Every one had something new and odd to tell of the unsociability and strangeness of De Lisle. These reports were speedily so much magnified, that many, when they did see him, actually wondered to see him do any thing like other people, and whispered to each other, "That after all, perhaps, foreign countries had not so much injured the young man, and

that it was a certain fact that he could be agreeable, though, to be sure, he might not always like the trouble." It was true he did not like trouble, but it was none to him to be agreeable; for, as the beautiful Augusta Parry soon discovered, even his silence was more eloquent than ordinary conversation. He had already met her frequently, without thinking it necessary to ask for any of the ladies, when he called on the old General. But Augusta, proud of the notice he took of her, and not unwilling to increase it, was determined to get over this piece of formality, if possible.

"Do you know," said she one day to him, "that my elder sister is come back to live with us? I believe you used to be friends."

"Not that I know of," thought De Lisle to himself, but he was far from saying so, and made some civil speeches about his regard for the whole family.

"Oh yes," cried his lively companion, "I hope we are all very good friends; but I had fancied that you, Ellen, and our poor William, were particularly intimate: perhaps I was dreaming, or you cannot carry nursery-anecdotes in your mind."

The names instantly recalled a tide of juve-

nile recollections, and Hubert felt the interest he might have thought it civil to feign. After many questions, to which he found in Augusta a willing answerer, he exclaimed, "Dear Ellen ! I can fancy her nothing but the beautiful, animated, affectionate child I last saw her. I am half sorry I am to see her a grown and altered woman !"

"Altered indeed, I should think !" said Augusta, with an arch smile.—"Nay, now," she gaily continued, "don't look so sombrous—my sister will not frighten you, if you come to see her, though you will find none of the animation you seem to have admired in your childish days."

"She has been unhappy?" said Hubert, as if half asking the question, half speaking to himself.

"She *has been*, possibly ; but now she appears to have a certain sort of quiet enjoyment. I have heard, William's death was a severe affliction to her ; and no wonder, for he was her whole brother, and with us she had but little acquaintance—but that, you know, is some time since. When her aunt, Lady Susan, made that strange marriage, she lost a very gay home, and the prospect of a fine fortune.

We all tried to receive her as affectionately as we could, but I dare say we were all awkward except my good mother, who never thinks of herself, and therefore is never ill at ease."

"You are a good girl, and I do not doubt your kindness to our poor Ellen:"—so Augusta interpreted the kind look of approval Hubert gave her, and the gentle, almost tender tone in which he spoke to her of something else; for he began to perceive how peculiarly interesting their conversation had appeared to the circle of observers with which every young unmarried couple are sure to be surrounded.

The next day he mounted his horse, determined this time to ask for Mrs. Parry as well as the General. About half way he encountered a gay party of equestrians, who checked the speed of their horses as they approached him, to exchange a morning salutation. One lady, either not knowing him, or not caring to lose a piece of good ground, galloped past.

"Ellen! Ellen!" screamed out one of her sisters; and Ellen reluctantly returned. She rode a very spirited animal, who instantly began capering at turning back so suddenly.

"She will be thrown!" exclaimed some of the party.

“Not a bit of it,” said her brother; “Ellen can sit any thing.” And so it proved, for bounding, frisking, and rearing, she approached with as quiet a look as if she were walking by the road side. The wind had not only given her a vivid colour, but had deranged some of her auburn tresses in a manner more picturesque than comfortable.

“She is still exquisitely lovely,” thought De Lisle, “though something I loved of her childish expression has vanished.”

It did not appear that Miss Parry was seeking any thing in his face, at which she scarcely glanced. She bowed her head in frigid silence; and Hubert, chilled and mortified, felt more than half inclined to turn instantly homewards—but he remembered she was unhappy, that she had ceased to be an heiress; and benevolence overcoming pride, he mentioned his intention of visiting Mrs. Parry, and renewing his acquaintance with the companion of his childhood. Ellen bowed again, with more kindness of manner, while something like a smile of thanks played over her unclosed lips.

Hubert had never before taken so much pains with any one; and not to be met even half way! It was very strange. Did Ellen think him one

who visited all the idle women in his neighbourhood, and helped them to pass away a morning? Or had she been spoiled by the adulation early paid to the heiress of Lady Susan Fitzosborne, and took all attention as the common politeness that was her due? He was aroused, and even startled in the midst of these cogitations, by the familiar appellation of "Hubert!" in a voice that for long had not sounded in his ears, but whose peculiarity of tone could not be forgotten. He looked up, doubtful whether to feel gratified or surprised at being treated with so little ceremony.

"Don't go over the child under your horse's feet," said Ellen, "and don't look so surprised at my impertinence. It would take me a great while to get acquainted with Mr. De Lisle."

"In truth, I believe," replied he, "Hubert was the more amiable of the two; and therefore I would rather be so to you."

"I have heard as much," she said, lowering her voice, so as not to be heard by the rest of the party, "but I believe neither the gossip of the county nor your own slander of yourself. I remember you a tender, generous, intelligent character, and I have no faith in your having become cold, proud, and censorious."

"To the two former I may plead guilty, but not to the latter. I never was censorious, and Ellen did not use to be so."

"Fairly retorted! I am, indeed, taking an ungracious way of renewing our friendship; but don't you know I always lectured in our young days, and *then* you submitted?"

"I will try and be docile again, but I fear I have lost the good habit."

"You *fear* it! Come, then, there are some hopes of you yet;" and Ellen turned her large bright eye upon him with somewhat of the gladdening expression of former years.

At dinner Lady De Lisle mentioned her wish of calling the following day upon Miss Parry, and her son offered to drive her in his curricle. His mother thought the weather somewhat cold for an open carriage, but, pleased with the attention, accepted it.

"I wish," said Sir Francis, "it was not so far off, for I should like to see that sweet child; though she is grown up, they say, less handsome than she promised."

"Yes," said Hubert, "much less handsome; or perhaps it is the mere fact of growing up that has spoiled her."

“Do you mean that a beautiful child is a handsomer thing than a beautiful woman?”

“No, perhaps not;—yet if I do not admire the child more, I am decidedly more interested by it. I remember Ellen, when every feeling shone bright and uncontrolled on the sweetest little dimpled face imaginable. I still see the pretty little graceful arm that hung round her brother’s neck, half in fondness, and half for protection; and the long heavy eyelashes, so often wet with tears as she and William spoke of their poor mother’s death. How often, when I have wept for company, has she stooped down to caress me, and told me I was a good child, and God would reward me by not taking away *my* mother.”

Lady De Lisle felt a passing pang at the subdued tenderness with which her son spoke, for she was aware that she had not been such a mother as Lady Ellen Parry, and could not reasonably have expected to be as much regretted. There was a momentary silence, which was broken by Sir Francis asking when Hubert had seen his former playfellow, and what she had done to make him regret so much her former self.

"Oh, nothing!" he replied. "I parted with the playful, open-hearted child, and encountered to-day the calm, self-possessed woman. It is all right, no doubt, and natural,—yet is the change unpleasing. She was always fearless, but then there was something in her high spirit that looked like enjoyment of life, in which in one so young we are apt to sympathize, and a noble ignorance and incredulity of evil, which cannot exist now. She is not masculine, but she looks so much to be her own mistress, and that of every thing that surrounds her, that she cannot, strictly speaking, be called feminine. Formerly her warm affections made her dependent on others—now they have subsided, or are controlled; for her manner is cold without being listless; indifferent, yet not inattentive. Altogether, the meeting her has given me an uncomfortable sensation."

"And yet," said his mother, "you return to-morrow?"

"Yes, for I may find myself deceived in my present opinion, or, what is more probable, habit will reconcile me to what is now disagreeable, and I may lose the identity of Ellen, the joyous, warm-hearted Ellen, in the cold, fashionable-looking Miss Parry."

"I was glad to hear," remarked the good-natured Sir Francis (who understood little of what his son had been saying, farther than as it implied some disapprobation of the young lady), "that she had something settled on her when Lady Susan married; and must also have all that the old Earl settled on her mother, at General Parry's death."

"That, I fear, is but little for one so educated," said Lady De Lisle.

"I never heard what produced the great difference in the fortunes of Lady Ellen and her sister," observed Hubert.

"Did you not? It is soon told. The late and last Earl Fitzosborne was a fortunate person. Born to nothing, he acquired before he died, all that men value most. He married an English heiress, and he survived all those between him and the Irish title. He was an eloquent speaker at the bar, and not a contemptible one in the House. He was unlucky but in one thing, which, they say, poisoned all his pleasures—he had no son. The title was extinct with him, but his property, it was thought, would have been equally divided between Ellen and Susan, and so perhaps, but for General Parry, it would have been, who being quar-

tered in Ireland ages ago, had an introduction to Lord Fitzosborne, and fell in love with Ellen. Some say both the sisters were in love with him, but he could marry but one, and naturally took the one he liked.

“The old peer, though vastly hospitable, and a great preacher of liberality, was in his heart a bitter aristocrat. He looked upon General Parry, a man of respectable family, excellent education, and most gentlemanlike manners—indeed, in all respects a rising young man—as a complete *mésalliance* for his daughter. She ran away, and he never saw her after. Lady Susan, who expressed as much grief and amazement as her father, supplied the place of the hitherto favourite Ellen, and was left sole heir-ess. She wrote to her sister after Lord Fitzosborne’s death; and Lady Ellen, who thought herself dying, and would not lose friends for her two children, overlooked her former unkindness, and lived with her as cordially as before. Lady Susan wished, on her sister’s death, to live with her brother-in-law, and take charge of his children, but to this he objected; I know not why.

“When he married again, his present very amiable, unpretending, little wife, Lady Susan

was so urgent to have Ellen, that he yielded, supposing that she would be more likely to remember her promise of leaving her what she possessed, if she never left her, than if she was brought up at a distance. Poor William, you know, fell in his first campaign, sincerely deplored by every one, and bitterly so by his sister, and I really pity her returning to unknown relations, (for they have rarely met,) and to the graves of her mother and brother."

"Oh!" cried Sir Francis, "she will marry, and forget all that. Was not her mother a very happy woman, who was brought up as splendidly, and had nothing at last to look to but her husband?"

"I don't think Lady Ellen was happy; though she was too proud or too prudent to show it. She was a woman of superior talents and endowments, and had the art of making her husband pass for a clever man; but though she deceived the world, she could not deceive herself on that point."

"General Parry is reckoned a sensible person now, I think?"

"Yes, he is not a fool; he is pleasant in his own house, and has much knowledge of the world. He does vastly well, but I am

sure you remember, Sir Francis, when he was thought something far above the general run; and while Lady Ellen lived, the illusion lasted. I can't help sometimes thinking he was in reality cleverer then. He was obliged to put the best part of his understanding forward, to be on a level with her; for he admired and loved her to the end. That is unnecessary now; Mrs. Parry was an accomplished, and still is a most amiable woman, but she is not as lively or well-informed as her husband, and looks up to him with more than deference. He is called upon to make no effort, and it is no wonder if some of the powers of his mind have rusted and decayed."

CHAPTER V.

THE following morning was clear and bright, and Lady De Lisle, wrapped in a fur pelisse, found her son's curricie less piercing cold than she had expected. Every one was at home, except the lady they wanted to see, who was walking with her half-brother. Just as they were departing, Ellen came in, but it was late : Sir Francis dined early, and did not like to wait for his dinner, (the best-managed husbands have always some little fancies, and that was his,) and Lady De Lisle could only make speeches without resuming her seat. Miss Parry, in a close bonnet and veil, with a shawl over her pelisse, was so completely disguised, that neither face nor figure could be pronounced upon ; but Lady De Lisle saw in her graceful motions, and the peculiar air with which she entered the room, enough to remind her of

her mother, and, touched by the recollection of a person she had liked as much as she was capable of liking, she dropped her artificial electioneering manner, and greeted Ellen with real warmth and kindness.

Miss Parry accompanied her to the carriage, and Hubert, who had been flirting, or more properly flirted with, to the last moment, by Augusta, ran down the steps not to keep his mother waiting, and took Ellen's hand as he passed. She neither withdrew it, nor seemed disposed to shake his in return, but the smile on her face was more courteous than cheerful, and he did not feel quite sure that she was pleased. Unaccustomed to being repulsed, De Lisle almost angrily gave up all idea of being on any other footing with Ellen than with her half-sisters; indeed, without meaning it, he soon found she was the only one of the family he never happened to sit next at dinner, or to talk to of an evening. As to dancing, that was out of the question, for Ellen would not dance: she said sometimes it did not agree with her, sometimes she did not like it, and sometimes she was tired.

She was seldom called upon to make these excuses, for she never went to balls, and in ge-

neral, as little out as possible, so that even a chance dance was an event. Her dress, too, was strikingly dissimilar from the younger Miss Parry's, and was more suited to their maiden aunt than to their sister. No flowers or beads ever mixed with her beautiful auburn hair, which was bound smooth round her head, as if her object had been not to show it off, but to make it take less room. A silk scarf in cold weather, and a lace one as it grew warmer, invariably concealed her shoulders, and almost her throat. Her marked air of distinction carried off an attire that in any one else would have been dowdy, but it still had the effect of adding many years to her age, and Hubert found many to doubt her being only three years his senior. Indeed, when he looked at her cheek when exercise had not flushed it, and at the slimness of a form evidently intended to be plump, he could not help thinking such ravages, which outstripped time, must have a secret cause. The next moment he discarded the notion as fanciful and romantic. Her smooth brow seemed unshaded by care; there was no contracted muscle about the mouth, which in repose was reflective, but not melancholy, and in action sweet and courteous. Her fine eyes,

though seldom sending forth a single flash of animation, were serene and soothing to behold, as the moon's light on a placid lake.

Hubert sometimes thought of her when alone, and wished to know her better ; but when thrown in her way, and that was seldom, something seemed always to occur to second her retiring manner, and place him at his usual distance. At last what he had foretold happened : he forgot his attaching little Ellen, and saw a mere bowing acquaintance in Miss Parry. Shortly after this change, he engaged himself to leave home for a few days, but could not fulfil the engagement, owing to a kick he had received from his horse on his ankle, which confined him to his own room. He was rather surprised to find that, the day on which he was to have left home, Ellen came to pay his mother a visit. It had been long promised, and nothing could be more evident than that it had been delayed till he was gone. He had ceased to think about her altogether, and she was now recalled in an ungratifying manner to his self-love.

With a little feeling of pique, he resolved on not interfering with her wish to avoid him, and, though quite equal to being wheeled into the drawing-room, chose to remain entirely in

his own room, and receive occasional visits from his father and mother.

The very first evening, however, he was tempted to relax, for Ellen played on the organ. He kept his door open, and thought he heard it quite well; but she sang, and, though her voice was not very powerful, a taste natural and acquired, and great sweetness, had made it something more than pleasing. He listened, and found he lost too much. He said next day to his father, that he had left his door open to catch the sounds; and was, as he expected, strongly urged to join them in the evening.

"I assure you," said Sir Francis, "it is quite worth while, if Miss Parry don't sing any more; for she is a most fascinating person, with such a soft caressing manner, and such a pretty kind way of saying things!"

Hubert was aghast. Ellen caressing and complimentary! He took breath before he could rally his father on having made a conquest of the lady; since, to every one else, her cold dignity of behaviour was conspicuous: he confessed that he was afraid of making his appearance, lest he should turn their fair guest back again to stone. Sir Francis laughed at the novel effect to be produced on a young woman

by the presence of a handsome young man, but promised not to assist the transformation by preparing her for the possibility of meeting so terrific a person."

When evening came, Miss Parry had played two or three pieces before Hubert could make up his mind to become a nearer listener. At last, she began a magnificent and somewhat loud piece of Handel's, under cover of which he thought he could be wheeled unobserved into the music-room. It was on the same floor with his, and the doors being open, and carpets all the way, he did indeed enter unseen by the fair musician. There were steps up to the organ, and she sat therefore above the others, looking, as Hubert thought, almost ghastly pale in the blaze of light that fell upon her. She had on a quiet morning gown, but no scarf to conceal her thinness; and her white garment and bloodless, transparent-looking fingers, gave her somewhat the appearance of a spirit, to which the sublime expression of her countenance, in harmony with the sacred music she played with so much feeling, added not a little.

Hubert, who loved music, and was not ignorant of its science, was less acquainted with that

style than any other, and felt, while he looked at Ellen, that it was made for her : there was a lofty energy of manner, a holy calm of features, in unison with notes of piety and thanksgiving, without which the spell would have been incomplete. Ellen turned to Sir Francis when she had finished ; and the cheerful kindly tone in which she addressed him, did indeed electrify Hubert. It was not mere surprise—it was emotion, half painful, half pleasing, for it gave him back the artless affectionate Ellen of his childhood—the Ellen he had thought lost, and believed he had forgotten ! At this moment she met his kindling eye, and her own looked the brighter. She half-advanced to meet him, but, as if recollecting herself, stopt, and expressed in a few coldly courteous words her pleasure at seeing him well enough to leave his room.

Hubert bowed his head in silence to the ceremonious compliment, and Sir Francis was obliged to say what had lured him thither. Ellen seemed little disposed to act the Siren any longer, for, taking up her work, she sat down by Lady De Lisle. Every one felt as if there was something on their spirits, yet every one laboured to talk except Miss Parry. Sir

Francis at last, wearied of a constraint so unnatural, and for which there was no apparent cause, was so urgent with Ellen to amuse them by playing or singing, that she could refuse no more.

"My fingers," said she, "are stiff for want of practice, but you shall have ballads if you like, which will not interfere with my work." Then turning to De Lisle, she advised him to stop his ears, as lovers of Italian music had a proper contempt for the harsh notes of England.

"I am afraid," said Hubert smiling, "if you fix on it in the hope that I shall not listen to, or enjoy it, you will be disappointed."

Ellen slightly coloured; and instantly began a popular air, which had little either of feeling or melody to recommend it. She sang carelessly, but she could not quite destroy the effect of her sweet voice and elegant manner, and Sir Francis wondered at the conclusion of each song, that he had never particularly admired it before. There was an old music-book lying on the table, which Hubert had taken up mechanically.

"What have you been poring over this hour with such a long face?" cried his mother, taking the book out of his hand. It was a hymn set

for three voices. "Is it pretty?" asked Lady De Lisle, showing it to Ellen.

Miss Parry looked at it, and grew a little paler as she answered, "I have not seen it for many years." Hubert sighed, and, as if by so doing he had answered her thoughts, she said to him, "We shall never all three sing that hymn again."

"We were not happy when we did sing it."

"Oh yes, we were! Perhaps we thought we were not, but such sorrow broke not our rest, such tears blistered not our cheeks. Did not William and I love each other the better for deploring our loss together, and did not you, whose infant feelings were for the first time awakened to sympathy, rejoice, I will not say, in our grief, but at least perceive with complacency how much it endeared you to us?"

"No, Ellen; I was unhappy because you were so—our childish feelings are not compound, as they become when the past and the future rise up to bewilder us. At that age, proofs of the affection of those we love are not valuable, as they are when experience has taught us distrust, because what we do not doubt requires not to be proved to us. I knew that I loved you and your brother, and that appeared to me

sufficient reason for being loved in return. I repeat that the sorrows of your childhood were the solitary shade in mine, which was otherwise a most joyous one, and there is no other period of it, *that* excepted, to which I would not gladly return."

"It is often but a poor compliment to our childhood to prefer it to the present," said Miss Parry, in a tone of unfeigned sadness; then, as if willing to account for the dejection she had involuntarily betrayed, she opened her work-box, and gave into De Lisle's hand a picture of William. He gazed attentively at it, and asked if she thought the likeness satisfactory.

"What," replied she, "is or can be satisfactory, to those who knew and loved a thousand fleeting expressions no painter's art can catch? That is a very good picture, and I prize it, for I can look at it till Fancy paints a more perfect likeness, and gives even the parting tones of kindness, which I felt then were the last I should hear on earth."

"Are you so superstitious, my dear, as to believe in presentiments?" asked Lady De Lisle.

"No; I do not say, rationally speaking, that they are likely to prove true, but they will

arise in almost every mind that is strongly affected, and be believed while the fear and the anxiety that gave them birth continue."

"You are so reasonable a person," said Sir Francis, (willing to give the conversation a turn,) "that I should not wonder to hear you argue of the impossibility of seeing a ghost, though you had actually met one at the moment."

"Very likely," said Miss Parry with a smile; "for I once had a great knack of seeing ghosts."

"Why, my dear child," cried Lady De Lisle, "what a young visionary you must have been!"

"It is very true, Ma'am, but I am tame now, and neither see visions nor dream dreams."

"I am heartily glad of it," exclaimed Sir Francis. "I confess it would alarm me excessively to meet you wandering about the house at midnight in an ecstasy."

"Nay, my dear Sir Francis, now you give me a worse character than I gave myself, for I assure you I never personated a ghost or frightened any one but myself; so you may go to bed in peace, without any dread of seeing me in white draperies and a taper, *à la* Lady Macbeth, undrawing your curtains to say 'Beware!'" and Ellen threw herself into a phantom atti-

tude with the lighted candle she held in her hand, and uttered the word in so sepulchral a tone, and with so fixed and sightless a countenance, that Sir Francis declared she had destroyed his rest, and Lady De Lisle complimented her on her good acting.

Hubert too was struck by it, but not agreeably. He did not like features and attitudes that were so much under command; and least of all did he like to see her wind up a conversation in which there had been so much to interest him, in so light and almost sarcastic a manner. Her's, he thought, was too much like the spirit that scorned itself, to be moved to feel for any thing. As Ellen bade him good night and read the disapprobation of his thoughts on his face, his attention was attracted to the peculiar expression of her's. It was utterly unlike any thing he had seen on her features before—something of triumph and amusement, with a confused fear of detection, to avoid which she dropped her eyelids as if their long fringes guarded her from betraying some lurking meaning behind them. What could it be? Had she meant to displease him, and did she rejoice in having effected it? Supposing that he had wished, even more than he did, to be on

a friendly footing with her, what evil could arise to her from his regard?

He pondered over this that evening and the next day, and came to the conclusion that her former childish affection had not merely sunk into indifference, but, from some unknown cause, actually turned into hatred. From such apparent injustice Hubert's proud spirit revolted: he took advantage of his sprain being much better to pay his visit, and Ellen bade him adieu with such undisguised pleasure, that he almost promised himself never to speak to her again. Whenever he thought of her now, it was with a sort of asperity that made him more pointed in his attentions to Augusta, merely to avoid having any to pay to her elder sister. De Lisle could not be rude, but he could easily be distant and haughty; and Miss Parry, who had not before seen him in that light, was at first astonished, and wondered if it would continue. It did so, and she then saw for the first time what people meant by his flirtation with her sister, now that she began to experience herself how coldly he could look, and how stiffly he could bow. She saw it with pleasure and hope.

Augusta was a girl it was as impossible not

to love, as it was always to approve. In her union with Hubert, Ellen saw every prospect of improvement for her sister, as well as of comfort. He is sensible, thought she, and will influence her; he is indulgent, and will not harass her. Miss Parry soon thought of nothing else; and though she made not a single remark, Augusta, whose shrewdness and sagacity were seldom at fault, saw it all, and smiled to herself, for she knew Hubert better.

One day on which he was to dine with them, and Ellen, consulted about her sister's dress, was actually placing some beautiful flowers amongst the soft ringlets of her brown hair, Augusta implored her, when she studied the becoming, to wear a less earnest look, or she would terrify her into believing she looked well in nothing.

"I dare say," said Ellen, "that *would* alarm you!—it's lucky that there is no immediate cause of dread."

"So, then, all this anxiety is only to charm one who, believe me, is beyond the reach of my enchantments, were they potent as Merlin's."

"If you thought so, you would hardly be so lavish of them, one would think."

"That's because your amusements are not mine, and *vice versâ*. I like flirting for its own sake—that is, for the attention, the conversation, and the dancing that it gives. I am not like my wise sister, expecting matrimony at the end, like yellow leaves when the summer has flown."

"Yet flirting *may* end in matrimony."

"So may a thunder-storm kill me; yet I like it, and have hitherto escaped mischief from it."

"I am slow of comprehending," said Ellen, "where the mischief lies of marrying Hubert."

"I thank Heaven that I wish not for Mr. De Lisle's hand, half as eagerly as you wish it for me; for I have consulted the planets, and they are contrary."

"If you wish them to be favourable, you are likely to be able to make them so."

"Ellen," said Augusta, dropping her playful manner, "I wish you to understand me in this matter, once for all. I aim at no more than I have—the distinction of Mr. De Lisle's attention. His heart is out of the question, and there is but one way in which it could be brought into play. I must first be in love with him myself, and I must let him see it. I am

not the former, and I could not stoop to the latter."

"Yours is surely a strange kind of pride. How often have I seen you stoop, as you call it, to insinuate a certain sort of preference for men I acquit you of the bad taste of really caring for?"

"That," eagerly exclaimed Augusta, "is the very thing! I did *not* care for them, but it amused me to feign it a little. It was all *badinage*, that their own vanity prevented their seeing through quite as clearly as you did. But to suffer a real feeling to master and subdue one! and then to betray it! and meekly hold out your hands to the chains that man in his tyranny would forge with links of iron, and rivet upon you for ever, when his are broken and trampled in the dust! No, Ellen, I will be my own mistress while I breathe, even though I should bear another name than my father's."

"May you long bear his, Augusta, if you could change it with such feelings!"

"Look not so reproachfully at me, sister. If I marry, which I have no wish to do at present, it will be with every intention of doing my duty; and to enable me to do so, I will keep my head clear, and my heart calm."

“ And you flatter yourself you could give up your darling pursuits, your thirst for admiration, to a man you did not love exclusively.”

“ We will see when the time comes ; besides, I may not have to give any thing up. I have seen many husbands, who delighted in their wives being admired and fashionable.

“ Heaven preserve you from such a husband ! He would blight your character, injure your feelings, destroy your *home*. How different from Hubert De Lisle !”

Augusta, who had been serious as long as possible, now began laughing immoderately—at one moment inventing supposed grave speeches of his to a dashing giddy wife ; and the next, applauding Ellen’s new mode of recommending a lover, by giving the lady reason to suppose she would have endless sacrifices to make, and would be thwarted in all her wishes. Overcome by her garrulity, and amused by her wit, Miss Parry took refuge in smiling silence, and the topic was not again renewed ; though she secretly flattered herself, that a disengaged person could not go on flirting for ever, with so engaging and handsome a girl as Augusta, without its terminating in the sober way she wished it to do.

CHAPTER VI.

THE summer was now sufficiently advanced to make parties more agreeable in the open air than within doors, and Mrs. Parry accordingly gave a breakfast in a marquee pitched upon a fine verdant lawn, from which diverged, as from a centre, four handsome avenues of beech and elm trees, with openings between, which discovered distant and rather pleasing views. Every body was disappointed to hear of excuses from Sir Francis and Lady De Lisle. There was a knot of first-comers quickly formed under one of the most shady trees (for the heat, as is usual, was found far more intolerable in the open air, and surrounded by humming and stinging insects, than it would have been in a large darkened room) and began lamenting this failure, and wondering, as the note

said nothing of Mr. De Lisle, whether he was included or not.

"Of course," said one lady, "he must come here," glancing at Augusta. "It would be so odd if he did not."

"More odd if he did," said Augusta drily, "if, as you suppose, Sir Francis has the gout."

"Oh!" whispered the lady to another, on whose arm she hung, "things are not in such progress as we thought, and the damsel affects not to expect him, that she may not be mortified if he should not come, after all."

A significant look and gentle pressure of the arm, implying the wisdom of silence till there was no one near to be offended by hearing, was the reply of the more wary companion.

"I hardly think," said a neighbouring Squire, "he would give up such a pleasant thing as this is likely to be. But I know of an invitation that has been sent to him, that he will certainly invent an excuse for, or refuse without any excuse at all."

"And what is that, Mr. Liddard?" cried every one at once, looking round significantly at all who were likely to give parties within sight.

"Why, Thompson the tinker is going to give

a ball, to show off all the young tinkers, and we are all to be asked, it seems, only the De Lisles were to be secured first."

A little more wonder, and a good deal more contempt than the occasion called for, was now expressed,—good-humouredly checked by Mrs. Parry, who observed that Mrs. Thompson was a quiet, amiable woman, and she did not doubt would have a good ball, as she had a large house and would of course be more anxious to please than those whose claims to gentility might be better established. No one had much to say beyond a chance sneer of Mrs. Thompson; but her husband, the vulgar, boisterous, arrogant purchaser of Barrymore Lodge (or, as he chose it should be called, Barrymore Hall) was fallen upon and criticised unsparingly.

"Well, be he what he may!" cried Liddard, fatigued with the torrent he had brought down, "all I say is, that De Lisle won't go to the ball, though his mother may think it a popular thing to do, as we may have another election. What say you, Morris?"

He could not have applied to a better man for a little opposition. "What do I say? why, that he will go, to be sure, and be the first there, and hand out the lady of the house, and

have the pleasure of lending some of his consequence to people who have none. You say he is proud and will stay away;—I say he is proud and will go to patronize.”

“What will you bet of that?”

“Oh, any thing! what you will! Here, Tom Parry shall decide;” and the laughing school-boy, enjoying both the argument and the bet, eagerly pressed forward.

There was a buzz of comments on De Lisle, amongst which the censure might often have stood for praise, and the praise quite as frequently wore the appearance of blame. A ramification of the argument started up in the shape of proper pride and dignity, and how far De Lisle’s might be considered in this sense.

“For my part,” said Augusta, who felt bound to defend her admirer, “it has never been made clear to me that Mr. De Lisle is proud at all; and I am sure I give all the young men full leave to be as much so, if they will but be half as pleasant.”

“Oh, Miss Augusta Parry!” cried Morris, “with all due deference, your vote this time goes for nothing: but here is a more impartial judge (turning to Ellen, who stood silently by

her sister). What do you say to Mr. De Lisle's going to Thompson's?"

"That if he goes, he will be gentleman-like, for he cannot be otherwise; and that if he stays away, it will be from a better reason than pride."

"And will you enable us to guess at the reason?" asked Morris sarcastically.

"Not easily, since I have not guessed at it myself."

"Oh, then, you merely repose an implicit confidence on his unknown reason."

"Even so—there are few things I have so much confidence in, as in Hubert De Lisle's good feelings." And Ellen calmly turned away and encountered the very person she was speaking of.

He stood an amused spectator, or rather listener, of what was going on, gratified by Augusta's lively defence, and considerably astonished at the more lofty grounds on which her sister supported him. He was not, however, on a sufficiently intimate footing with Ellen to express his sense of obligation otherwise than by a bow and look of thanks; but going instantly up to Augusta, he caught the end of her long

sash, and, carrying it with an air of mock gallantry to his lips, he exclaimed:—

“To the generous defender of the absent—homage and greeting from her faithful slave! And now of what am I accused, and what is it I am not to do?”

Liddard, who was a bitter, but not a bold man, had no fancy to risk the encounter of a proud and ireful glance from young De Lisle; he therefore was conveniently deaf, and turned on his heel, humming a tune, as if he had never been concerned in the conversation. But Morris, who had a comfortable share of assurance, instantly declared both their bet and reasons for it.

“Who would ever have thought,” said Hubert good-humouredly, “that my doing so insignificant a thing as going to Mrs. Thompson’s, or staying away, could have lost or won a wager!”

“You will go? won’t you?” asked Augusta.

“If you will dance with me.”

“Hold!” cried Morris, “I can’t admit of bribery, though in my own cause: we must put the lady out of the case, hey, Liddard!”

“But you can’t put all the ladies out of the case, or it would be a new sort of ball; and while there is so much youth and beauty to be

found at Mrs. Thompson's as we have here at this moment, we shall all be bribed to go. Besides, you are quite right, I shall be proud to patronize so amiable and respectable a woman as Mrs. Thompson."

"And so honourable and polished a gentleman as her husband," muttered Liddard.

"Poor Mr. Thompson ! I fear I cannot plead his cause. It has ever been sufficient reason to me for avoiding a man, that he is personally disagreeable to me, and our tinkering neighbour has the ill-luck of being so to most people. However, he is our neighbour; so we must visit him once a-year, and give and take a yearly invitation to something—why not to a ball, as well as to a dinner? I think it the best, and decidedly the most popular thing of the two."

"Who would ever have thought Mr. De Lisle would have been such an advocate for dancing!" was the exclamation as soon as Augusta and he had moved away. Of course, his companion had full credit for having wrought so marvellous a change; and the prognostic was gaily made, and eagerly received, of Augusta giving plenty of balls at the Park, when she became its mistress.

The repast, which in compliance with fashion was called a breakfast, was pretty and well-

conducted, as every thing of the sort always was at General Parry's; after which the company dispersed; some danced and some sat still, some talked and some sang, some strolled about and tried to be sentimental, while others ran through the winding walks in search of their companions, who would have been more certainly found with half the exertion, laughing alike over their success or failure.

Augusta, who under pretence of doing the honours, could pay Hubert more attention at her own home than any where else, told him she would show him Ellen's favourite walk, and led the way through shrubberies and parterres till they came to an open lawn, where she suddenly stopped, and, making her companion a sign of silence, pointed to her sister at a little distance, who, with the young Parrys and some of their playfellows, seemed busily employed in fixing stakes in the ground. She clapped her hands, which, it seemed, was the signal for the race; and when they had gained a few yards, to the surprise of Hubert she herself started, and, speedily outstripping them, looked laughing back, as she reached the goal.

"How fleet and graceful she is!" exclaimed he, "and how her beautiful hair shines in the

sun, as it used to do when her brother and I called it burnished gold !”

“You may thank me,” said Augusta, “for a sight of the race ; for, if we had moved or breathed, Ellen would not have run ; and even those glittering tresses would have been covered, and have expiated the sin of beauty by close confinement and gloomy darkness.”

“How strange ! how incomprehensible ! Is she a prude, or a Methodist, that she has such a holy horror of being admired ?”

“Neither, I believe ; she is good and gentle, and indulgent, and in all points but that natural. If she were a timid person, I should understand her shrinking from observation, and dreading display : but she is not that—her brilliant talents and enthusiastic temper are for ever impelling her forward, while some factitious reasoning or exaggerated principle, that I cannot understand, as instantaneously checks her. It is very lucky for me ; for, if Ellen would but be herself, I should soon have to hide my diminished head.”

“She certainly is handsome, but without your youth, freshness, and brilliancy, she would hardly be a rival you could fear.”

“Oh ! don’t think to soothe my alarm, for

even should my complexion fade to the moonlight tint of Ellen's, I have a charm would keep me sovereign still !"

" And what is that ?"

" Why should I tell you the secret ? But I fear not to have it known. I love to reign over the fancy of many ; Ellen would care to influence only the heart of one, and that one must be so unlike any body I ever saw, that the chances are she will go to her grave without meeting with him."

" At least, then, if she is fastidious, she allows of the possibility of loving, and of meeting some one to deserve her love : so far she is more reasonable than you."

" I was not aware that love and reason are synonymous."

" Nor I ; but is it not unreasonable to expect our garden of life will bloom to refresh our eyes and gladden our hearts, if we voluntarily root up the fairest flowers that grow there, and cast them like noisome weeds away ?"

" I am afraid you are terribly romantic, Mr. De Lisle !"

" And I am afraid you are not romantic enough, Miss Parry !"

They had reached a woodbine seat of Ellen's, and Augusta, fatigued with the heat and her walk, sat down and began carving her name upon the soft bark of a young birch-tree. De Lisle idly followed her example. She cut such large letters, that they soon overtook his diminutive ones.

"Now for the effect of our ingenious performance!" said he, stepping back a few paces and reading aloud, "Augusta De Lisle."

The words seemed to startle his companion as well as himself. He recovered first, and said, he hoped she approved of the name, which was a very pretty one, he thought.

"Yes," said she quickly, "but, like most other things, it looks best at a distance; a little farther back and we shall see only Augusta conspicuous and alone, while your more wary letters vanish from the sight."

"Hubert smiled; but, without taking up the sarcasm on himself, replied, "That Augusta is born to be conspicuous, I have not now to learn; but, one of these days, she will find also that it is not good to be alone."

"I defy your prophecy, and will at any rate enjoy my present liberty;" and she laid a mali-

cious emphasis on *present*, and was rather mortified to see it did but deepen the smile that was lurking in the corners of Hubert's mouth.

"After all," he said, "if we talk till Doomsday on this subject, we shall but say over and over again that there is a light-hearted gaiety in a passionless spirit, very pleasant and joyous; and that there is a real enjoyment in requited tenderness, that none who have tried it would exchange for the other."

"If you speak *avec connoissance de cause*, we are indeed unequal combatants; and now, what say you to returning to the gay haunts of men?"

They joined the dancers, and found General Parry inquiring for Ellen: no one knew what had become of her. A note at last was brought to Augusta, which she read to her father.—"I am at the cabin on the common, and if it gets dusk before I return, would you try if you could find a servant at leisure enough to come for me? if not, perhaps old Martha could walk so far without fatigue."

"They were pensioners of her brother," said the General with a sigh; "but what can have taken her to them on a day that it will be so inconvenient to send for her?"

"If you would allow me to go, Sir," said Hubert, "I might possibly be as efficient a guard as old Martha for your daughter."

"You!" exclaimed Augusta; "why, Ellen would render herself invisible, before she would walk home at this hour with a young man."

"Not when I send for her," said General Parry (who fancied he saw a little jealousy in his daughter's speech); "and if Mr. De Lisle will take the trouble, I should really be obliged to him, for Tom has walked home with Mrs. Esher and her daughters."

Hubert waited not for another word, but, striking through the plantation, leaped its boundary, and was on the common immediately. He slackened his pace as he came in sight of the cabin, and the impulse of good-nature that had prompted his offer having been yielded to, the unpleasant idea presented itself of the dull walk he would have with Ellen; and he regretted, not that he had come, but that Augusta had not proposed accompanying him. It was too late, however, to think of that now, for he was at the cabin-door. It was open, and at first he could discover only a kneeling female figure beside a bed; but as his eye grew more accustomed to the light, or rather darkness of

the room, he discerned, with an emotion of discomfort, a figure on the bed of a ghastly old man, on which Ellen gazed, with a countenance that revealed his situation. She was alone with the dead; and Hubert, inexpressibly shocked, went forward and addressed her. She arose from her knees when she perceived him, and speaking low, as if she feared to rouse the spirit that had abandoned its earthly frame, she said,

“His grandchildren will return directly; I must watch the corpse till then. Stand you without the door—the air is purer.”

“He did not die of a contagious disorder?” said Hubert, with a new feeling of alarm for Ellen.

“Oh, no! he was old and worn out; there is nothing to fear but the oppression of a hot room.”

“I have braved that before in a worse cause,” said Hubert, seating himself near the body, and trying to overcome the feeling of disgust with which the sight inspired him. He tried in vain; the contrast was too keen, of the gay throng he had left, to the still chamber of death. It was a sudden check to the animation, the thoughtlessness, and the frivolity that had so lately occupied him. He had witnessed the

last moments of life before. He had seen the young and the beautiful suddenly cut off,—he had watched the approach of dissolution in the friend he loved best ; but grief then left no room for other thoughts ; and there is besides a “pomp and circumstance” in the demise of the rich, that changes in some measure the tone of our feelings.

But this was death between disease and poverty, and the nice fastidious sense of the child of opulence shrank from the spectacle. He turned, to seek refuge from the sickening oppression that overcame him, to the placid features of Ellen. He gazed on that pale face, as one would read a book ; for, to an eye like his, scarce a thought could flit across her open brow that was not seen and understood. At first he could discern some of that anxious solicitude, too awful for curiosity, with which every thinking mind watches the last struggle of mortality—the struggle they must one day make, and would gladly know something of by the experience of their predecessors. The painful intensity of attention was chastened by the habitual feeling of religious confidence ; and though the dark curtain, as it were, was almost withdrawn, the gloomy chaos beyond gave full

exercise to the mental faculties, but appalled not the constant spirit that knew to what it trusted. De Lisle was aware that the natural delicacy of Ellen's taste was refined as his own, yet could she gaze on the unsightly object before them without either horror or disgust, for there was other matter in her mind, and she forgot not that the high-born and the elegant have not a soul more precious than the poor labourer, against whose rough couch she leaned.

The grandchildren returned at last, followed by a troop of neighbours, come to offer their assistance and satisfy their curiosity ; for with the poor a birth and a death have nearly equal attraction. The stillness produced by the first shock of dissolution to the survivors had given way as soon as the family of the deceased were called upon to relate their loss ; and they came back in tears, uttering laments and exclamations, in which affection for the old man, and arrangements for disposing of him as speedily as possible, made a strange and inconsistent jumble, that grated harshly on Hubert's ears.

Ellen and her companion departed unnoticed in the bustle and noise that ensued. She went on a few paces in silence ; then, stopping to take

his arm, she said in a tone of apology, "We must not judge of them by ourselves. Our sensitive feelings are nurtured and sharpened, theirs are blunted. When we lose a parent or a friend, we stay by them to gratify ourselves by giving way to sorrow, but we withdraw from details to which the poor must attend. We keep our grief sacred, and are spared every circumstance revolting to our natural feelings. The only room in which that whole family live and sleep, is the one in which we left the corpse. Superstition forbids their sleeping there now; and though we who have no labour to exhaust us, not only can do without sleep for a night or two, and would think it a sort of sacrilege to yield to the inclination, or to feel it even, the poor are in absolute want of the sustenance, and cannot do without it. The fault is not in their feelings, which are often quite as strong as ours, but rather in the difficulty we have in placing ourselves in their situations."

"It may be so," said De Lisle; "yet, I confess, grief so coarse and selfish never could excite my sympathy, though I might think myself equally obliged to relieve it as far as I could."

"But, my dear Hubert," said Ellen, with

affectionate earnestness, "you never could relieve it, if you did not at first feel it."

"I am sorry for it, but I cannot make myself feel."

"Oh, yes, indeed you can; but there is nothing difficult to be done without at least wishing it. Now, confess the truth; you would be sorry to understand their feelings, to bring down the tone of your mind to the level of theirs? You would scorn yourself, could you follow the grovelling line of their thoughts, and bend to their ignoble wants. Of the vulgar pride of birth and wealth I acquit you; but are you equally free from the pride of intellect? and do you not virtually say to your neighbour, 'Stand back, for I am better than you?'"

"I know that I am a spoiled child, and may overrate myself; but still there are distinctions in this world, though there may be none in the next,—at least, not of the same sort,—and to me it appears natural and proper that they should exist."

"We are wandering from the argument; I do not propose that you should associate with those below you in virtue or talent, nor even in rank or station. There is neither philosophy

nor religion in confusion. All I want is, that you should be able so far to put yourself out of the question, as to rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep. The joy of a child is not yours, yet you do not object to share it: the grief of the poor man is not yours, yet it may be shared if we forget our own peculiar feelings to follow those natural in his circumstances."

"But in order so fully to sympathize with every age, disposition, and station, you must give up yourself at once, and lose your own identity."

"And is not that just what I am wishing for you? You fear for one moment not to be yourself. Have you, then, so much pleasure in your own thoughts and feelings, that you cannot afford to dismiss them for an instant, and try those of others? There is a lonely grandeur in your mind, Hubert, and you are in love with it: you refer every thing to yourself, and spurn a self-oblivion that would richly reward you."

"I can parody Alexander's speech. If I were not myself, I should like to be you. In that case, should I understand myself, Ellen? or should I be the same enigma in my own eyes that I should appear to others?"

The enthusiasm that lighted up Ellen's noble countenance vanished at once. Neither light nor spirit could be traced on a face so lately refulgent with both. She turned her troubled eye on De Lisle, and smiled sadly as she replied,

"Will not my example convince you, as my precepts have failed? In the endeavour to rouse the spirit that is in you to something higher than it has yet aimed at, in tracing the turnings and windings of a disposition so familiar to me in childhood, and so interesting therefore in manhood, I have lost that identity you prize so highly, and have had the pleasure to forget myself. I thank you for it, and, in so doing, answer your question. If I did not understand myself, I should not be so willing to dismiss the subject."

"It is then as I feared, and you are not happy, Ellen?"

"It is ungracious to reject your sympathy," said Miss Parry in a tremulous tone, "but I cannot profit by it. I have suffered, and the doubt whether I was acting right has prolonged those sufferings, but all is gradually subsiding into distance. I am unfitted for the world, and shall probably never again move in it. I wish to be as little noticed as possible; and where

that wish is sincere, none ever finds it unfulfilled."

"That is not so easy as you imagine. You must be noticed, if not to be admired and loved as you ought, to be feared and blamed."

"I must then be blamed, if there is no alternative."

"Surely, my dear Ellen, this is exaggeration. You may not wish to dazzle, you may not care for praise, but why seek to chill hearts that are open to you? Why reject affection?"

"It does not, and must not exist for me," said Miss Parry firmly, almost sternly; "beyond my own family, I will possess the regard of none."

"It is a hard decree, Ellen; but if it cannot be rescinded, I must submit. It is melancholy to think that, but for some unnatural and incomprehensible bar, circumstances and disposition had conspired to make us friends."

"They have conspired in vain," said Miss Parry, with all her accustomed cold stateliness of manner.

"Here we are," said De Lisle, "at your father's door, and at its aspect vanishes every trace of the kindness and interest a few minutes since I might have flattered myself you meant to show me; and I am like the man in the 'Arabian

Tales,' who eagerly received bright coin, but, bringing it to the light, found it had been fairy gold, and that he possessed only the cold green leaves in which it had been wrapped."

"Yours is so imaginary a distress, that you were right to illustrate it in so fanciful a manner," said Ellen, with a faint smile. "But where are you going? You have in a most neighbourly manner done your duty, by guarding one of General Parry's daughters from sprites and goblins—will you not continue your guardianship, and protect the other from *ennui*, and Lord George Levayne? Come in,—Lady Augusta is expecting you."

"If I did not think Lord George as able to shield your sister from *ennui* as myself, I might have some scruples in accepting your invitation."

"It is not often that a man is dangerous who does not pretend to be in earnest; but I cannot quite suppose Augusta could put you and that fair puppy on a footing."

"She may not think us alike, and yet we may answer the purpose of amusing her equally well."

Miss Parry sighed, but said no more, and Hubert followed her into her father's drawing-

room, without quite being able to make out how far the sigh was one of regret for her sister's coquetry, or for his own indifference to her. They found all the company dispersed, except some regular old cronies of General Parry's, who stayed to make up his usual rubber at whist. The children were gone to bed, Tom had not returned from Mrs. Esher's, Mrs. Parry was half asleep on the sofa, and Augusta was playing at chess with Lord George Le-vayne.

This young man's father was nearly related to Mrs. Parry ; but as she had lived, from the day of her marriage, entirely in the country, and the noble Marquis had married a fashionable belle, who had a common horror of country cousins, they seldom or never met. Lord George by chance discovered the relationship, and was glad enough to claim the privilege it seemed to give him of making a sort of inn of General Parry's hospitable mansion. It was just in his road from College to his father's ; it was a good sporting county, and there was a good table kept : three things to which he allowed no small share of importance.

Augusta was delighted to carry about a titled admirer, which has a good air in the country : her

mother was glad to receive any relation : Ellen cared and thought very little about him, Tom sometimes longed to horsewhip him, and General Parry often repeated, " A fine youth that, if he had but been in the army ! A little service would have been the making of him." Lord George, quite indifferent to the degree of regard felt for him, was content to be kindly received, (indeed, never doubted but that he must be that every where,) and drank the General's good wines, and flirted with his pretty daughter, with real satisfaction, and apparent *nonchalance*.

This foppish youth, on seeing Ellen enter, followed, to his surprise, by so young and handsome a man, instantly conceived the design of tormenting the sober prude, as he was wont to call her ; and with an appropriate theatrical air exclaimed, " Divinest Helen ! hast been wandering with Menelaus or Paris by this chaste lunar beam ?"

Ellen coldly and contemptuously answered, " You see, my Lord, I had better company."

" Better ! Oh, ye immortal Gods ! what blasphemy ! better than the heroes of Greece and Troy !"

“ Menelaus may have been a hero, but was clearly a goose, and the heroism of Paris is yet to be proved.”

“ It would be somewhat hard to call every man a goose, whose wife tires of him ; and the flight of the Trojan was strictly heroic, since he bore away the prize.”

“ A man who cannot retain his wife, must be either a fool or a brute, possibly both ; and surely to fight for her when she is gone, is folly surpassing belief. I am too dull to discover traits of heroism in the action of Paris : he betrayed his friend, disgraced his mistress, destroyed his family, and ruined his desolated country.”

“ Now you confound cause and effect. He could not prevent the fortune of war.”

“ But the war itself he could have prevented. His guilt was its cause, and the result his just punishment.”

“ Nay, 'pon my soul ! Miss Parry, you're too severe,” cried the young Lord, exhausted by an argument he had so unwittingly plunged into. “ Miss Augusta Parry, your queen is in check.”

“ And your's too.”

“ True ; I have bamboozled myself with the Trojan war.”

“ See what it is,” said Augusta maliciously, casting a side-glance at De Lisle, “ to venture out of one’s depth !”

CHAPTER VII.

FINE weather naturally brings persons in the country more together. Distant neighbours can return at night, favoured by long days and dry roads. There was now a succession of dinner invitations, which Hubert, after one or two struggles, found, must be accepted. He met the Parrys every-where and flirted with Augusta as usual. Ellen did not go out; and when he saw her at her father's, she kept out of his way as much as ever. Yet he did not consider her exactly with his former feelings. He could not indeed guess the reason of her avoidance, but he was pretty sure it was not dislike, as he had supposed at first. He was divided between benevolent regret, when he imagined her unhappy, and extreme curiosity as to the nature of that unhappiness. He thought so strong a mind could hardly have been affected

by any common grief so far as to give up the world so entirely. He could believe that some unfortunate attachment might have clouded her spirit, and for a time weakened her mental energies; but the more he saw and heard of her, the more he perceived that her mental faculties were unimpaired, her affections unchilled. The cold varnish of politeness, with which she covered over and concealed her feelings from general observation, was seen through in some measure by so keen an observer; but the cause of all this artificial coldness was still hid from him.

Exhausted by conjecture he would often determine to think of her no more; but there is a spell in mystery, from which imaginative tempers cannot escape. Besides, though he could not divine events, he could guess at sentiments, however slightly implied; and he was aware that Ellen was better known to him than to others. She was a sealed book indeed to him; but he only wanted a clue by which to break those seals, which were perceptible to no one else. "Miss Parry don't go out—she has indifferent health"—or, "I rather believe she is a serious person;"—such were the remarks made and assented to in the neighbour-

hood. Augusta's young intimates had been willing to have been Ellen's also, but they soon found she was too old for them. She did not paint screens; she did not net purses; she had no new song to write out for them; no French pattern of work to lend them. They thought her an obliging quiet person; but Augusta was so much more agreeable, that they forget her; and Ellen was thankful to be forgotten.

Imperceptibly there had been a mode of communication established between De Lisle and Miss Parry. He often uttered sentiments to others which he meant for her: he often in conversation appealed to her by a look, and though she as often turned away, he knew he was understood, and could see approbation or dissent in the faintest involuntary motion on her part. If any of the family mentioned an opinion of her's, a book she was reading, De Lisle was immediately master of the subject, and always rather gratified on finding how much their tastes accorded.

Mrs. Thompson's ball had been put off, but was now to take place, and was announced as a Fancy one. There was a vast deal of planning about the dresses, and the men declared stoutly,

they would be fanciful no farther than by wearing the Militia uniform. So it was at last decided that some pretty dress should be adopted by the young ladies, who would be all alike. It was left to Augusta, who invented a gay and picturesque attire, that gave general satisfaction.

With much triumph, Augusta informed De Lisle she had contrived to induce Ellen to accept the invitation before the dress was talked of, and for once she should see her look like a young woman. Ellen at a ball in a fancy dress! De Lisle could not believe his ears. It was true, however. Mrs. Parry had worked on her good-nature, by representing that the Thompsons would be so hurt, and think themselves slighted if she stayed away. They mixed so little in society, that they would never understand she did not go to other places. She need only show herself, and keep the carriage waiting to return, especially as it was so near.

“It is but one ball,” thought Ellen, “and thank Heaven! we have no other neighbours who would think my going to them such a compliment.” Then came the dress, and Ellen actually coloured when told it was the uniform,

and she must wear it. She demurred, and would gladly have made a few changes, but at last recollected she should be more conspicuous by deviating from the rule, than by attending strictly to it. Accordingly, she copied Augusta with scrupulous fidelity, and though she knew that she looked much handsomer than usual, she thought of her sister's youth and freshness, and flattered herself she would be unremarked.

The important moment to Mrs. Thompson arrived at last, and she had the pleasure of seeing her rooms filled with the first people in the county. She looked anxiously, however, to the door, for the De Lisles were not come; and she trembled, lest something had occurred to prevent their coming at all. It was some mitigation to her disappointment, that one of her daughters had actually been asked to dance by Lord George Levayne. Poor Mrs. Thompson had curtsied down to the ground on hearing the vast honour a Lord had conferred on her girl, and was as near being angry as she knew how with the damsel herself, for not inventing a more than usually gracious form of acquiescence.

The names of the De Lisles were announced

at last, and echo caught the glad sound, and conveyed it first to the gratified ears of the hostess, and successively to the more quietly pleased ones of several young ladies who wanted a distinguished partner to begin the evening well with. De Lisle left his mother to make their excuses for being so late, and went on to speak to many who seemed eager to greet him. As he looked down the handsome room in which they were preparing to dance, he was agreeably struck by the *coup d'œil*. It was like a thing on the stage, and he longed to see all the pretty figurantes in motion.

The next moment he began to discover how much of individual beauty was lost by the adoption of one costume. Every one looked alike, and as he passed through a bevy of smiling females, he scarcely knew one woman from another. He sought rather eagerly for the Parrys, wondering if Augusta looked as well as ever, and more than usually curious to get a sight of Ellen. He had thought at first he should like to see her gaily dressed, but had finally determined it would spoil her. There was a sober grace about her that a fantastic dancing-dress would mar—a sort of classic simplicity with which her usual attire accorded—

he thought of the dignity of an empress, and the gaudy trappings of a dancing-dog, and felt sure he should be provoked and annoyed.

Augusta was standing up to dance, looking so joyous and busy that De Lisle forgot to complain of the dull uniformity that had wearied him. He asked for Ellen. "I could not chain her like a wild beast, and lead her about the room," said Augusta; "I reckon I have performed wonders in bringing her here, but I could not take charge of her any longer. I left her talking to that tiresome old Mrs. Runnington, near the orange-trees."

Hubert followed the direction of her eye, towards a recess filled with green-house plants. He made his way thither as soon as he could escape the numerous greetings that intercepted him. Within a few yards of the recess, there was an opening in the crowd that enabled him to distinguish Miss Parry. She had taken off her gloves to tie up some branches of a moss-rose tree that, advancing too far, had been rather rudely brushed past, and had actually shed some of its leaves on the floor.

Her attitude was simple and graceful; that was nothing new, but it was more juvenile, as well as the occupation that produced it, than

seemed natural to Ellen, though just then her gay dress and slight figure accorded well with it. What most struck him, was the singular beauty of her uncovered arm. He recollected how much, as a child, its polished contour had been remarked ; since then, he had always seen her in long sleeves, and as it is not a very common beauty, he did not think of looking for it, till chance displayed it in so striking a manner. He regretted when she drew on her gloves and shrunk rather back. At this moment, one of the Miss Thompsons came to thank her for the protection she had afforded the plant ; and having said what was civil, would gladly have regained her former situation, but a group had closed up the space she had just crossed, and she stood by Ellen, whom she had never seen before that evening, feeling and looking perfectly forlorn.

Miss Parry saw and pitied the embarrassment of a girl unused to a crowd, and good-humouredly offered to pilot her back in safety. Glad not to feel quite alone, Miss Thompson took her arm, and profited by her proposal. Ellen thus called upon to emerge from the darkness that had hitherto shrouded her, soon attracted every eye. Those who knew her, eagerly availed

themselves of their knowledge to address her ; those who did not, as eagerly inquired who she was, and sought an introduction. There was a buzz round Hubert.

“ What a beautiful woman !” said some.

“ How dress becomes Miss Parry !” said others.

“ Now she has once curled her hair,” said a lady, “ I hope she will never pack it up again, and bind it round her head the shortest way to get rid of it.”

“ The hair is very well,” said her husband, “ any way, but what I rejoice at, is the discarding those shawls and silk handkerchiefs, that were always tied round her throat. It is a sin to hide such a throat, smooth and white as polished marble ; and what a line for a statuary from the ear to the shoulder !”

Hubert wondered at the unpleasant sensation all this gave him, and tried to repress the impatience which praise of this sort, applied to Ellen, excited. He acknowledged that she was lovely, but he almost wished her less so, or that none but himself might feel her beauty. He watched her countenance, and saw an expression of discomfort on it, struggling with the flush of consciousness on perceiving the ad-

miration she inspired. In vain she drew back, the circle deepened round her: she lost none of her self-possession of manner, but much of her serenity of countenance. The faint crimson streak spread over her delicate cheek, and glowed with almost the balsam's tint; her brow gathered nearly to sternness, and her unsettled eye seemed seeking some one to shield her from so much observation.

Strange as Hubert thought her embarrassment, he could not but pity the distress it occasioned. He came forward, and without waiting for her usual cold salutation, drew her arm within his as he said, "Let us seek some quieter place, there is too much glare and heat for you here." She followed in silence the impulse he had given her—she took the seat he placed for her in the most secluded nook of the refreshment-room, and was still more thankful to him for standing before her, and affecting to have a good deal to say to a lounge he scarcely knew. De Lisle cast back a hasty glance to see if she had recovered herself, and seeing her natural paleness return, he feared she might be really ill, and pouring out a glass of water, offered it to her. She took it with a smile so

sweet and sorrowful, that he could not but feel for her, and involuntarily exclaimed,

“ I wish you had never come here ; it is too much for you ! ”

“ I wish, indeed, I never had,” said Ellen with a deep sigh. “ I was a fool not to remember that ‘ fine feathers make fine birds,’ ” and she cast an impatient glance at her showy dress, which plainly added, ‘ but they do not make happy ones ! ’ “ Besides, I have lived so quietly, that this is like making a *début* I never meant should be made at all. However,” she added, rising suddenly, “ I cannot keep you here all night in attendance on my whims. The starers must take their fill, and then think of something else : it is better to put up with the annoyance than to make a pathetic scene here.”

“ My dear Ellen,” said Hubert gently, “ why brave what is so painful to you ? My mother’s carriage is not gone—let it take you home ? ”

“ You are very good,” replied Ellen thankfully, “ to pity so much what must appear to you so absurd ; but I must go through it all this time. It is but for once.”

They re-entered the ball-room as she spoke,

and were met at the door by Lord George Levayne.

"I was afraid," said he, "you had played me false, and were gone."

"Oh, no!" said Ellen, "I do not forget my promises."

"Come away then, for the set is forming." And to Hubert's amazement, Ellen went to the middle of the room, and stood up to dance.

"If I could have guessed it," said he to Augusta, "I would have asked her before."

"There is a key," said Augusta laughing, "to every mystery, if we could but find it out, and I will give you the key to this some other time; but here is my partner seeking me."

"And don't you mean to dance with me to-night?"

"That must depend, in some degree, upon whether I am asked."

"Well then, the supper-dances, if you are disengaged?"

"I'll think of it," said Augusta quickly, as she hurried off, afraid of losing her place in the dance.

De Lisle took out a young girl he scarcely knew. His mother, who was always thinking

of the next election, rejoiced to see Miss Jenkinson standing opposite to him, for her father had more interest than any other landed proprietor in the county; and Lady De Lisle was little aware that Hubert had quite forgotten that she had a father, and had asked her, because she was a nice-looking girl, who seemed anxious to dance, and was apparently overlooked by other people. In the country, it is fortunately not yet considered the essence of finery to dance only with a few women in a particular set, who are invariably those to whom it gives least pleasure, because they look upon it as their right.

Cecilia Jenkinson, delighted to be at a ball at all, and doubly delighted to get the best partner in the room, was too much taken up with her own inward feelings of satisfaction, to notice De Lisle's silence, or to wonder that his eye followed nothing but Ellen Parry. Her own so naturally took the same direction, that she would have thought it odd had he looked at any thing else.

Ellen stood up at first with a vacant countenance and listless manner, that marred the effect of her beauty. She was naturally excessively fond of dancing, in which she had

early excelled, and she had not long moved to measures that recalled the "days o' lang syne," before the music, the lights, and the exercise, had their usual effect: the clouds rolled off her heavy brow; the spirit of other times awoke the sleeping lustre of her eye, and Hubert envied Lord George the smile that broke over her sunny face. The next dance was to a livelier tune, and the hilarity of her manner accorded with her sprightlier motion. There were knots of gazers at the bottom of the room, to look at Miss Parry dancing; but she was saved the annoyance of supposing herself more observed than others, from having been in the habit, at Lady Susan's, of seeing better dancing than her own, and not, therefore, being aware how preeminent she was at Mrs. Thompson's in grace and elegance.

"Are you tired?" said De Lisle, as she passed, and had to set to him.

"Oh, no, just awake!" was the unexpected reply.

"Why," thought De Lisle, "is so incomprehensible a creature so very attractive?" A little more reflection might have taught him that was one of the causes of attraction, but the moment was not propitious for investigating the secret

springs in the human mind ; and having taken his partner back to her mother, he sought out Ellen.

She declared herself ready to dance with him, but said the carriage was coming for her in half an hour, so that she might have to leave him in the lurch.

“ One dance is better than none,” said he, leading her back to her place ; but the set was unformed, for quadrilles had been proposed—and quadrilles in the country are a serious business. Ellen made an effort to be left out, but no one would hear of it. As is usual, it was much easier to muster ladies who knew the figure than gentlemen, and there was one spruce little man, opposite Augusta, who exhibited steps so peculiar to himself, and which so completely set the art of dancing at defiance, that she was almost convulsed with laughter, and enchanted to see her sober sister, though veiling her merriment with more skill, suffering as much as herself. They were not assisted in preserving a decorous gravity by Lord George Levayne, who took every opportunity, with an air of extreme earnestness, of imitating the inimitable performance. De Lisle looked quietly on. He had too much good taste to be a

quizzer, and had by far too great a dread of being absurd ever to give in to pantomime, or be for a moment any thing but a quiet gentleman.

The figure concluded,—and even their galvanised *vis-a-vis* was constrained to repose.

“One waltz,” cried Lord George, “while they are forming their long set;” and several couples began whirling away, to rest themselves as they said.

“You don’t waltz, Miss Parry, do you?” asked De Lisle.

“Why, no; I am almost afraid.”

“Of what? Of being abused?”

“Oh, no! of being giddy. It is so long since I have waltzed.”

“Then you *are* a waltzer?”

“I was—and liked it very much—the music is so beautiful!”

“So is the music of the quadrilles?”

“Yes, but not so much so; and they are more trouble and more exhibition—two unpleasant things to me.”

“Suppose we take one turn, then?—you can stop if you feel giddy.”

“No, it is better not—I should have to waltz at home, and I rather suspect Mrs. Parry don’t quite like it.”

"Augusta waltzes?"

"Oh, Augusta does as she pleases."

The carriage was announced, and Ellen, taking the opportunity of her sister being at the other end of the room, quietly made her escape. "What a balmy night," said De Lisle, as he handed her into the carriage. You had much better walk home—you will be there as soon, crossing the Park. Do let me go with you."

"Thank you," said Ellen, laughing; "but I have done crazy-enough things, for one night."

"It is quite dry—it could not hurt you. Do put your head out and smell the honeysuckles?"

"Very fragrant; and the walk would be very pleasant; but I am not going to take it—so good night!"

"Strange woman!" thought De Lisle, as she drove off—she won't walk a hundred yards with me, and she will waltz with any man that asks her!"

The next morning it was but civil to inquire after the Parrys, especially as it was close to Barrymore-hall, where all who could left their card.

De Lisle found General Parry out, his wife keeping her room with a head-ache, and his youngest daughter not down. He ventured to

ask for Miss Parry, and the servant went in, not to seek her, for he was quite aware where she was, but to ask if she admitted any one. He returned with the expected negative, but it was quite evident from his manner that Ellen was at home, and De Lisle somewhat fretfully remounted his horse. As he cantered down the avenue of limes leading to his father's, he met Lady De Lisle walking. He had not seen her before that morning, and giving his horse to his servant, joined her.

"Have you been calling on Mrs. Thompson?" asked she.

"Yes, and on the Parrys; but found no one."

Lady De Lisle looked round to see that the servant was out of hearing, and then began,

"They are the very people I want to talk to you about, my dear Hubert. Your father does not go to many evening parties, you know; so that, last night, he was particularly struck with what every one else has seen this age."

"And what may it be that is so obvious to every one?"

"You need not affect to misunderstand me—I allude, of course, to your flirtation with Augusta."

“Is that all,” said De Lisle, with a slight elevation of his eyebrows—“and what thought my father thereon—or rather, what do you think?”

Lady De Lisle passed over the implied sarcasm, and mildly answered, “Both your father and I wish your happiness only, Hubert; and if it will be increased by marrying Augusta, we are not likely to oppose you, though we might have wished it otherwise.” De Lisle felt a momentary sensation of gratitude to his mother, for being so ready to meet his supposed wishes; but it was checked by the recollection that, with her disposition, she would always affect acquiescence, the better to gain her ultimate object. At this moment she happened to be sincere; but as her son possessed no talisman to prove her words, it was not surprising that he should mistrust them. It signified, indeed, very little just then, as he tried to convince her, but she would not be convinced, and urged the opinion of others as well as her own.

“All the world united,” said Hubert somewhat impatiently, “will not persuade me out of my senses. I am not the least attached to Augusta, nor is she to me.”

“Do not answer for too much: you best

know whether it suits you to marry Augusta, but don't try to persuade me she would not marry you."

"No, I never said that. All her family would conspire against her if she did so rash a thing. All I say is, she don't care for me. She is a pretty, agreeable, accomplished girl, who willingly gives me her time and attention : I should be unreasonable to ask for more ; first, because I am not disposed to give her more, and, secondly, because I believe she has no more to give. I don't believe she possesses the faculty of loving, at least she has the discovery to make yet."

"You don't expect her to make love to you ?"

"No ; and as I don't mean ever seriously to make love to her, you need not prepare for a daughter-in-law yet."

"Few things would give me more pleasure, as I think I prove by my readiness to receive Augusta. With your advantages you might marry very differently ; you might add to your consequence, increase your influence, and choose in any family. But sooner than not see you married at all, I would try and content myself with General Parry's daughter."

"She and I are infinitely obliged to you, but just at present we are in no need of your indulgence."

"And is it possible that a mere flirtation can carry you so often to the Parrys'? Or am I only mistaken in the object, and is Ellen—the faded, but still beautiful Ellen—the attraction?"

Hubert was absolutely startled. He had never asked himself how far he liked Ellen, and the question was uncomfortable to him. With a forced laugh, however, he replied, "That would be a most unlucky inclination indeed! but I hope I am not so wayward a being as to fling away my affections on a barren rock, where they might wither, but could never blossom."

"If you care so little for Augusta, and not at all for her sister, I return again to my question,—why are you always at the Parrys'?"

"Perhaps," said De Lisle, with a face of mystery, "I am in love with Mrs. Parry."

"Hubert! what idle jesting!"

"Upon my word, my dear mother, I have been serious as long as I could, but you were determined I should be in love with somebody, so I made a random guess to oblige you. I really do like Mrs. Parry very much, and I am very

sure she likes me better than either her daughter or her stepdaughter does. I have a sort of tame regard, too, for the hospitable benevolent General. They have both been very kind to me ever since I can remember any thing ; and as their house is much the pleasantest in the neighbourhood, it is surely allowable that I should go oftenest to it. I confess it is the only one in which I feel at home ; my appearance interferes with no one's employment, sends nobody out of the room, causes no one to be sent for into it. The dogs and children caress me as a welcome guest, and I am aware that, to a certain moderate degree, every one is pleased to see me."

" I can understand all that ; but I must be allowed to give their full value to the sparkling eyes of the young lady."

" And so do I. They give life and gaiety to her father's house, and I am glad to behold their light there ; but without a wish to see them shine on a home of my own."

" Well !" said Lady De Lisle, with a sigh, " then if it is really so, I must give up the hope of seeing you comfortably settled for the present."

" To soften your regret, remember how un-

likely a person Augusta Parry is to settle comfortably anywhere. She would always want to be flying and fluttering about ; and if by chance her husband should like home, what a good chance he stands of getting it all to himself !”

“ Oh ! you don’t know how she might turn out, if she were properly managed.”

“ But I never mean to have to manage my wife.”

“ I am sure she won’t manage you !”

“ No ; I mean there should be no management at all.”

“ A pretty well-regulated household you are likely to have !”

“ I mean it to be unique ; but as it takes some time to prepare for perfection, you can’t wonder that I am not in a hurry.”

A longer time than usual elapsed after this conversation, without Hubert’s seeing any thing of the Parry family. Lady De Lisle regretted she had spoken so openly to her son, fearing the bare hint of marriage had induced him to give up an intimacy that he himself perhaps acknowledged might so end. She was confirmed in this idea by a very slight circumstance.

She had the finest conservatory in the country, because she liked that every thing she had

should be the finest and best. Accordingly, she was more solicitous to have rare and expensive plants, than beautiful or sweet ones. It happened, that one she prized highly died unexpectedly, and, as she had not a single cutting from it, she was anxious to replace it. Miss Parry heard, through the gardener, of her loss, and sent her a very handsome one she had herself reared, of the same kind. Lady De Lisle was so delighted with her acquisition, and said so much more in acknowledgment than was necessary, that Ellen, to stop the current of so much thankfulness, told her, if she thought it so great a robbery, she might send her a Fuchsia in lieu of it, which would be considerably more valuable to her. Lady De Lisle gladly promised one, but on her return home was dismayed to find she had only some young nurslings, besides two handsome ones before her windows, that looked so well, mixed with mignonette, that she was loth to part with them. Hubert raised the difficulty at once, by sending one that stood in his own room, and was of a magnificent size. Ellen would have been quite content with a slip to plant, but was better pleased with the handsome one she received ; and a few lines express-

ing admiration of its beauty to Lady De Lisle, showed her it had been sent in her name.

She now began to fear in earnest that her remarks had determined her son to be more distant and formal with his pleasant neighbours than she at all wished, and she urged him so strongly to accompany her one morning, when she was going to call there, that, for want of any reason strong enough to oppose to her earnestness, he consented. They heard music as they drove to the door, and, on entering, found the room quite full of some young companions of Augusta's, all busily engaged in trying some new music she had just got from town. Mrs. Parry, who had taken refuge from the noise in her own sitting-room, was summoned down stairs to Lady De Lisle. Ellen was out riding with her father; and Hubert, going straight up to Augusta, addressed her as usual. With an air of mock solemnity she arose and made him a low courtesy: Hubert made her as profound a bow, and then asked the meaning of his reception.

"When one has not seen people for a great while, it is the proper way of receiving them, is it not?"

"I am much flattered that you should think it a great while."

"You are easily flattered then, for I dare say the footman would pay you the same compliment."

"I was not aware that it was the same thing to be missed by him or by you."

"You are very saucy; I never told you I missed you."

"Well, but if you marked my absence, it is still something in my favour."

"You will say presently I have grown thin upon it;" and she made a motion with a rose she held in her hand, as if she had meant to strike him with it.

"Take care," said he gaily, "what you are about; if you fan me with the flower of love, I may come oftener than you might want to see me."

"Oh! when you are figurative and poetical, there is no talking plain English to you."

"Talk to me in music, then, and discourse sweet harmony."

"Which part of that do you admire most, the scolding wife, or the smoky house?"

"I rather think the six squalling brats are

better than either—combined they are too charming ; so give me something newer.”

Augusta readily complied, and Hubert, as usual, was sorry when the moment for departure came. Just as they were setting off, General Parry and his daughter rode up. He dismounted, with old-fashioned politeness, to speak to Lady De Lisle ; and Hubert went up to Ellen, admiring and caressing her horse, which was a remarkably fine one. She looked particularly well on horseback ; and Hubert, struck by her noble air, and the freshness air and exercise had lent to her cheeks, told her he was glad to see she was all the better for her dissipation. Upon her saying how little inclined she felt to repeat the experiment, he begged her to hamper herself by no rash vows, for, added he,

“ You know not how gay we are going to be ; we are going to have part of the —— regiment ; and its Colonel, Lord Avondale, is coming to my father’s.”

The smile was arrested on Ellen’s blanched lips ; her eye fixed on De Lisle, seemed unable to avert looks to which belonged no vision, and she remained mute and motionless as if spell-bound.

" Good heavens ! are you ill ?" said De Lisle in alarm.

" Only a little giddy," she said with effort, and almost immediately fell from her horse. He saw she was fainting, and had taken hold of her, so that her fall was no farther than against his shoulder. He carried her into the hall, set her down on the first chair, and gave her up to her family, who flocked around her. The moment General Parry beheld his insensible daughter, struck with her likeness to her mother when she had breathed her last, he could not be made to understand that she would recover directly, but taking her cold and powerless hand, he exclaimed—

" My noble, my high-minded Ellen ! must I lose thee twice ?" The grief of age is most painful to witness. Hubert felt it was so, and leaving his mother to offer either assistance or consolation, he abruptly left the room, and made the best of his way home.

The walk was long, and, just as he turned into his own grounds, he espied his mother's carriage. He stopped to inquire how she had left Miss Parry.

" Oh ! quite well," was the reply ; " she was merely fatigued with a longer ride than usual,

and faint with the heat of the sun. I left her talking and laughing, and her father quite himself again."

"Talking and laughing!" thought Hubert, "what an effort!" for he could not be taken in about the ride and the sun. He remembered on his way home that Lord Avondale and William Parry had been great friends, and were in the same regiment at the time the latter was killed. That this circumstance might excite some emotion in Ellen on first meeting Lord Avondale, was perfectly natural; but that the mere mention of his name should produce so much effect, he could not understand, especially as he well remembered that her countenance changed before he was named, though it evidently became more ghastly afterwards. Whatever her feelings might be, he respected them too much to make them the subject of discussion with any one; and was almost reluctant to yield to the wishes of Sir Francis and his mother, that he should call the next day and inquire after her, fearful of being thought by her to scrutinize her too narrowly.

He went however, but found no one at home, and was turning his horse's head to depart, when the servant informed him some of the

family were in the pavilion in the garden. Thither Hubert bent his steps, and found Augusta in front of the building playing at battledore and shuttlecock with a Mr. Lorrain, who was on a visit to them ; her mother sitting in the door-way, hearing a young girl her lesson ; and Ellen at a large embroidery frame, covered with floss silks, looking very notable and very weary. Hubert feared it was less of her work than of her thoughts that she was tired, but he was careful not to betray any anxiety. So far from it, indeed, that after slightly bowing to her, and saying he saw she had recovered the heat of the preceding day, he sat down by Mrs. Parry, and insisted on hearing the lesson that made her look so grave.

The youngest boy came in with a bunch of flowers in his hand, which he threw at Hubert, to which invitation for a riot he immediately assented, till the child, shrieking and laughing, threw itself into Ellen's lap, and overturned, in so doing, the frame at which she was working.

" You mischievous fellow !" said she, good-humouredly patting his little curly head, " see what you have done !" The child, who had high spirits but a very docile temper, was instantly

tamed, and it was not till Hubert had picked up the frame, and restored every thing to its former order, that he ventured to ask, "if he had done much harm."

"No, dearest," said his sister, stooping down to kiss him, "don't you see that your play-fellow has set it all to rights?" The boy's sober look was dispelled by the assurance, and he seemed quite ready to renew his gambols, but De Lisle, telling him they had made noise enough, took up a newspaper and sat down in silence. The child went out to watch the game in which Augusta was engaged, and as Mrs. Parry had previously left them, no one remained but the little girl learning her lesson at the end of the pavilion, and Ellen, who had resumed her work. Hubert was not aware of this till Miss Parry said in a low, suffocated voice.

"You did not tell me yesterday if you expected any more company? Is your friend accompanied by his ——" she stopped, and with increased difficulty began another phrase, "Does Lady Avondale come to the Park?"

"How little," said De Lisle, "can you know of that gallant Peer, who is *not* my friend, as to imagine he would bring his wife any where that he could help!"

"I knew," said Ellen more calmly, "that it was not a happy union, but I did not know that it amounted to dislike on his part."

"On both sides, I believe, so much as to produce a separation, which, but for the children, would be complete."

"He has two, I think?"

"Yes, very fine boys. His marriage, it is said, was in some measure forced upon him."

"How so?"

"Lady Avondale's father was a most unprincipled man, who lived by gaming. He was nearly reduced to beggary by a run of ill-luck: he took advantage of winning from Lord Avondale, an unsuspecting and not an habitual gamester, a considerable sum, which the latter could not immediately raise, to propose a marriage with his daughter, which was to cover the debt. The moment he had secured an establishment for his only child, he cut his own throat, and poor Lady Avondale found herself at the same moment a bereaved orphan, and the unbeloved wife of a man she cared little for."

"Poor thing!" said Ellen, shuddering, "it was a hard lot! Was it true that she had another attachment?"

"It was reported, but I believe solely be-

cause she was seen not be attached to her husband."

"It was strange, too, that she should not like him, for he could not be unkind to her."

"I never heard that he either beat her, or starved her, but, with those exceptions, he is supposed to have made the worst husband in England."

"But remember, if she did not like him, his mere absence must have been a relief; and his attachments elsewhere, if they existed, a matter of complete indifference."

"No one can like entire neglect. If she has any feeling, but I do not assert that she has, for I have seen but little of her, and was not particularly pleased with that little—if it exists however, how galling to know she was taken so reluctantly, and at the prayer of her own father!"

"It might have been happier for her if * * *
* * * It is a bitter thing to belong to Lord Avondale!"

The asperity with which Ellen spoke, the wild and haggard look which accompanied words that apparently so little called for either, distressed Hubert, who could not but see there must be something painful beneath an emotion

so foreign to her serene and benevolent spirit. Feeling the silence that ensued awkward, as betraying too much of his thoughts, he hastened to say something, with which, as usual in such cases, he was displeased the moment he had uttered it. She answered :

“ No, it is not prejudice. I do Lord Avondale more than justice. I show him mercy ; and if we must meet, *he* will feel it more than I shall, though now, you think, I feel too much. My brother, as you say, knew him, loved him, trusted him, and died in his arms ;—yet Lord Avondale insulted his memory, and betrayed his trust !—All this,” she added, after a short pause, as if to recover self-possession, “ is connected with circumstances that might be painful to my family, and therefore to them is unrevealed.”

Hubert bowed, as accepting the caution to silence ; though, as Ellen well knew, none stood so little in need of it. He heard without surprise, a few days after, that she had been recommended sea-bathing, and with one of the younger children was to leave home the very day on which Lord Avondale would arrive at the Park.

CHAPTER VIII.

DE LISLE could not help examining their guest with more attention than he had hitherto bestowed on him. But he examined in vain ; Lord Avondale was not a penetrable man. Adored in his profession, in which he had distinguished himself ; courted in society for the brilliancy of his wit, and the advantages conferred on him by situation ; he spent a careless, and to all appearance a merry life.

Bland and courteous in his manner, there was no getting beyond the smoothness of the exterior. He failed to inspire confidence, for his own heart was masked ; but of admiration he had plenty, and that seemed to suit him as well. He had a command of countenance, a steadiness of nerve, that nothing could overcome or shake. If he expressed no great feeling for any one but himself, no very amiable or benevolent senti-

ment ; neither did he sin so far against the rules of good taste, as to imply what might be thought the reverse. He was a complete man of the world, and as such, De Lisle had never felt any interest in the acquaintance ; but what he might be more, was past his finding out. Lord Avondale inquired with perfect steadiness of feature after their neighbours the Parrys ; begged De Lisle would present him to the General ; spoke in a handsome, graceful way, of his eldest son, and slid out of a subject Hubert suspected must be embarrassing, with a degree of facility and composure truly astonishing.

He had written to General Parry on William's death, and as at the moment he was strongly affected, the whole family were grateful for the feeling expressed. He was accordingly received with great cordiality, and said and did all that was proper on the occasion. The event was so distant, that no one but General Parry was much affected by a recurrence to it, and he quickly recovered himself. As they returned home, Lord Avondale rallied De Lisle on his attention to Augusta, who, not quite liking his companion's tone, answered pointedly—

“ When the sun is absent, men worship the

moon. In Ellen's absence Augusta may be admired."

Lord Avondale spurred his horse, reined him in, then turning a shrewd glance on his companion, he observed, unconcernedly, "How you manage to get the world to suppose you engaged to one sister, if you really care for the other, baffles my comprehension."

"The world is very obliging to make engagements for me. The truth is, I am no more in love with one sister than with the other. I only say, the youngest can bear no comparison with the eldest."

"When William Parry and I took leave of Ellen last," said Lord Avondale, somewhat seriously, "she was as beautiful a creature as the sun ever shone upon. She was about eighteen, and all the brightness of blooming youth was upon her; but she has faded since, I hear, as all things must fade, and nine years can pass over no head with impunity."

"Oh!" said Hubert, "if it was only time, she would not look as she does. At seven and twenty her bloom need not have so decayed—her fresh youth been so blasted."

"And to what other cause," asked Lord

Avondale, turning his keen eye full on De Lisle, "do you attribute a change, you fancy premature?"

"I am not her confidant," replied he somewhat haughtily, "nor should I think her a likely person to have any; but that there is some unknown thread of misery interwoven with her life, I see and deplore."

"You had better," said Lord Avondale sarcastically, "marry her out of pure compassion for this hidden grief. I do not doubt you would console her, be the pang real or imaginary. But come, we have had enough of the Parrys—now for a race across the Down!"

In about six weeks Ellen returned, and De Lisle accompanied Lord Avondale to a dinner at General Parry's, with a vague sensation of curiosity and solicitude respecting the first meeting between his guest and Ellen.

"We are too many at table for my sister to-day," said Augusta, "but she will appear in the evening."

Lord Avondale, who had hitherto been remarkably silent, seemed to recover his spirits, and be relieved from some oppression. When they joined the ladies, De Lisle followed him closely, and saw him recognize Ellen with

something of a start. He went up to Augusta, however, with an unaltered countenance, and fixed his eyes on Miss Parry, until she lifted her's from her work, when he bowed profoundly. Ellen coloured, and made a slight inclination in return.

Hubert thought he might be some relief to her, and, advancing, did what seldom occurred to him—took a vacant seat beside her. She did indeed seem glad to see him, and even held out her cold and tremulous hand to welcome him. Hubert thought he could detect an impatient gesture in Lord Avondale; yet why he should dislike his shaking hands with a person to all appearance so indifferent to him, was what he could not make out. De Lisle was not one of those who bring themselves forward, or like to hear the sound of their own voice: accordingly, when he spoke to any one person only, his subdued tone and intelligent countenance gave the idea of a much more confidential and important communication than was really taking place.

This peculiarity of manner seemed no small annoyance to Lord Avondale, who in vain tried to follow his present conversation. Augusta perceived the absence of his manner, and wan-

dering of his eye towards her sister; and coming nearer, she, by way of joining in the conversation, lifted up the end of a large net for fruit trees that Ellen was making, and asked when she proposed inclosing Mr. De Lisle.

"My nets," said Ellen, lifting her heavy eye with a peculiar expression to Lord Avondale, who now stood over-against her, "are feeble, and all too used to break."

"But why should you think," said Hubert laughing, "that I would struggle against them? You do not know but that a very feeble band, once fixed, might bind me."

"I have little experience in *firing* bands, whether strong or weak," she said in the same tone.

"We are the sport of circumstances," said Lord Avondale gloomily. "The gossamer's threads might fix eternally where fate wars not with hapless mortals; and if the voice of destiny is against us, what avail links of iron and adamant chains?"

"Time was," said Ellen coldly, "when Lord Avondale felt and acknowledged that we make or mar our own destiny. But in some cases I can understand the wish to shift the responsibility off our own shoulders."

Lord Avondale seemed to shrink as from some implied meaning, but the well-controlled muscles of his face gave no outward sign of inward agitation. No farther conversation passed between them either then or on several other occasions when they met, and Hubert could perceive nothing remarkable between them, except that Ellen regained, at each time of seeing Lord Avondale, more of her natural serenity, while he was losing, in the same proportion, his lively, careless manners. Except in her immediate presence, he was the same as usual ; and De Lisle felt he gained too much by his visit to regret it.

The contrast of Miss Parry's feelings for the two naturally influenced her manner, and she could not but turn from Lord Avondale with renewed approbation to Hubert. The latter became also, in some degree, a shield against the former ; for, though Lord Avondale rarely addressed her, his eye was seldom off her ; and his watchfulness, without embarrassing, seemed sometimes to displease her. She took refuge from such close observation with De Lisle, who was always ready to talk or to listen, to screen her from others, or occupy her with himself. Lord Avondale's impatience with him at such

moments was so obvious, as even to be observed by Augusta, who not unfrequently compared the noble Peer to the dog in the manger ; as he had no pleasure in conversing with her sister himself, and seemed determined no one else should enjoy what he could not. There was something unnatural in all this ; but as things we cannot account for, if we see daily, cease to have any effect on us, so De Lisle was getting quite accustomed to his greater intimacy with Ellen, to her severity towards Lord Avondale, and to his sad and docile manner to her, which, it would have seemed, ought to have disarmed keener disapprobation even than her's. He was awakened to the remembrance that all was strange around him by overhearing a conversation stranger still.

One beautiful summer's evening, Augusta and he were in her flower-garden, a gay little spot much inclosed. She had left him at one end, having perceived the gardener at the other, to complain of the sickliness of some moss-roses ; and he remained beside a high, but thin beech hedge, on the other side of which was a walk. Two persons were coming down it, and Hubert presently distinguished the voice of Lord Avon-

dale; and as he approached nearer, he plainly heard their conversation.

"Ellen," said Lord Avondale, in accents of unrepressed agitation, "I can bear it no longer. You pour floods of bitterness on a heart that has not changed with circumstances—on a conscience no time can sear.

"What is it you require of me?" said Ellen calmly.

"Alas! I have lost the right to require aught; but in mercy to me, to yourself, nay to him, feed not the growing passion of young De Lisle."

"How can you suppose me so lost to principle, my Lord? Circumstanced as we are, you have indeed lost the right to be jealous; yet is it less of an insult in my present situation than it would have been formerly. You judge of me by yourself."

"Cruel Ellen! are not mine years of guilt and misery enough? Will you, too, heap coals of fire on my head?"

"I have no wish to reproach you—but of what should we talk?"

"Of you!—for it is vain to talk of so lost a person as I am. In short, I must and will

warn you of the precipice on which you stand. I know you will not marry De Lisle; but what is my security—I should say what is your's, that you will not love him? Ellen, I abhor that young man. I hate him for his quick eye, that sees too much—above all, for his friendly, open manner, that reproaches my coldness and deceit. Beware, Ellen, how you love him, for my hatred then should not stop at words!"

"Barbarian! is it thus you seek to influence me?"

"Pardon, pardon. I know not what I say;—yet, for your sake, consider—"

"Consider what? I have had enough of love, Avondale, believe me: believe the withered form of her whose withered heart you cannot see, when I tell you an angel's silver tones could never more wake the slumbering passion in my breast. I am not very young in years—I am old in feeling, and you might trust to my honour not to excite in others what I ought not to return, and could not, if I might. I will answer for none but myself; yet I believe I might answer for Hubert."

"You do not, you cannot believe it! On what would you found such a belief? Is it on his ever-wakeful vigilance to all that may please

or shelter you? Is it on the greedy ear with which he devours a chance word of kindness from you, or the unconscious softening of his voice when he addresses you?"

"Do not let these fancies trouble you. If you knew him as I do, you would understand his retaining for me some of the regard of his juvenile days. He is amiable, and generous, and feeling; but as I do not betray all the regard I really feel for him, there is no gratified vanity to be the nurse of love; and besides, the most amiable man is not insensible to the charm of youth and beauty—a charm that here is wanting."

"I do not say you are the same Ellen I quitted nine years ago—quitted with an agony that was doubtless a presentiment of all the evil that was to ensue! but I do say, that even your pale cheek and heavy eye are attractions to him. My beloved Ellen, you have suffered—but you do not know the worst pang of all. You have never caused the misery of another—beware——"

De Lisle could not catch another syllable; indeed he scarcely heard the last few words, for a faint sob from Ellen denoted that she was in tears, and he knew too well how potent that

grief must be to which she could so yield, though but for a moment. He plunged into another part of the shrubbery to avoid Augusta, for he felt the necessity of a moment's solitude to still the storm within him. That Ellen had been engaged to Lord Avondale, seemed obvious; that his desertion of her had stifled all regard and all esteem in her breast, was also evident; but by what romantic code of feeling could she suppose herself not only incapable of all other attachment, but culpable in yielding to it? He pondered it over in vain. Towards Lord Avondale, a married man, who presumed to be jealous of a woman he had abandoned, his feelings were full of ire and disdain. He felt that he longed to be dear to Ellen, if it were only to avenge her cause and his own on this selfish tyrant. He never had liked him, but he perceived now how much he had overrated him, and his distrust of human nature increased tenfold.

The delight with which he had heard Ellen's confession of more regard for him than she thought fit to display, convinced him that he was indeed fonder of her than he had himself supposed. If she could once be brought to care for him, how happy she might yet be;

for her ardent spirit was in want of some object of ardent attachment. To make the happiness of Ellen!—to see her beautiful eyes beam with their natural light, to bring back to her cheek the tint that tears had washed out! Hubert's heart leaped at these thoughts. Yet now that she was put on her guard against him, this was more difficult than ever. He determined to be so cautious, that she should not take fright till her affections were fairly his—to renew his flirtation with Augusta, which he had rather given up to Lord Avondale—to omit no opportunity of attention to any of the family, in order to prevent a possibility of her withdrawing from the intimacy.

Having restored some little order to his thoughts and feelings, he lost no time in joining the party, complaining bitterly of Augusta's desertion, as a cover to his own rudeness in not waiting for her. He found Lord Avondale discussing some military topic with General Parry; and he shrank from the smile in which his features were dressed, and the smooth brow on which not a trace of his late feelings remained. Ellen soon appeared, and he asked himself why he condemned not her serenity as dissimulation also. But he soon confessed that, though some-

times inexplicable, she was never insincere. She did not gloss over her feelings and veil her natural temper. She overcame the former, and directed the latter. Her composure was not feigned—it was in truth acquired: hilarity she never affected, though at times something would elicit a spark of the gaiety natural to her. She was seldom sad, because she thought it a duty to discourage sadness; she often tried to be interested in things that did not affect her, and such was the benevolent facility with which she sympathised with others, that she often succeeded; but if she failed, she did not affect what she had not felt. As far as he could guess at the motives that actuated her, De Lisle knew a more upright and lofty spirit did not exist. High as was the standard of her duties and the tone of her feelings, she had the talent of coming down so gracefully to the level of ordinary understandings and commonplace tempers, that her superiority was felt only by congenial minds.

The more Hubert studied her, the more he marvelled at an attachment formed in such early youth having had power to cast its baneful shadow over her maturer years. Nine

years was a period that, young as he was, he could hardly look back upon. It was not solitude that had nursed romantic recollections ; for till her aunt's inauspicious marriage no one had lived more in the gay world than Ellen, or been more admired in it. He could understand the ravages of passion so long as it existed ; but when overcome, when the struggle was once over, he could not see why its victim should not return very nearly to what she was before. He felt and argued as a man ;—he forgot that affection is the natural element of woman ; that once yielded to, it becomes interwoven in her frame, forms a part of every thought and every feeling, and is not a chance ingredient in the cup of happiness, but becomes the draught itself. He could not guess at the blank that succeeds the loss of *all* that was valuable ; for love, to the most affectionate of men, is but a part, and he did not know that there are women to whom it is the whole.

Lord Avondale had taken a small house in the vicinity, to which he removed on quitting the Park. He gave dinners and balls, and did all the popular things expected of a man in his situation. In the winter his regiment

was ordered elsewhere, and he took leave of the neighbourhood with the usual speeches and expressions of regard and thankfulness.

It was a dull day to the young ladies of the environs, when the positive departure of every officer was announced. Some regretted the dancing that had flown with them, some their excellent band, and even Augusta, though less disconsolate than her companions, acknowledged they would lose something in general cheerfulness. Ellen alone was glad; and seeing no reason for concealing the fact, monstrous as it appeared, confessed it was quite a comfort to know she might take a ride without seeing that eternal uniform that had haunted them so long.

"What will sister Ellen do," asked little Jane Parry, "when the hunting begins, and we have nothing but black caps and red coats?"

"Ay, poor Ellen!" said her brother, to whom the remark was addressed, "there will be another 'eternal uniform' for her."

"Oh, no!" said Ellen, "hounds and hunters may always be avoided, as they move *en masse*; but for idle officers, one sees them hanging on every gate, and galloping down every green lane."

Hubert was little disposed to take the part of the military, whether collectively or individually, and flattered himself Ellen's satisfaction at the departure of Lord Avondale might redound to his advantage. He could not, however, discover that it did so: Ellen seemed to have relapsed into her former manner. He was vexed, but not positively discouraged; for he remembered it was her system not to treat him with any distinction, and he did not now attribute it to caprice or coldness.

CHAPTER IX.

WINTER wore away and spring found the De Lisles and Parrys much where the last summer had left them. Augusta was still the *belle* of the country, and still her light tones and dimpled rosy cheeks bore witness to the cheerfulness and levity of her temper. Ellen was a little fatter and a little more animated; her eldest brother was fancying himself a man, and strutting about with newly acquired notions of importance; and even little Jane was curling her hair with more care, and getting sister Ellen to tie her sash, from an instinctive reliance on her superior taste. Hubert recollected with regret, that he was going to town shortly, and should not see Ellen for two months. He had little inducement to share in the gaieties of the capital; but he had al-

ways said he would go, and knew not how to retract.

From the moment Sir Francis ceased to find any amusement in giving dinners, the pleasure of London was at an end to him. He cared not for politics; he liked his quiet game of cards much better in his own house in the country than at a club, or an old dowager's in town. For some time he went each year for a shorter period than the one preceding it, and at last resolutely broke through the habit, and said he would rather not go at all. Lady De Lisle was quite as well pleased. At the Park she was a person of importance; in town she was of none. Well born and connected herself, and having always lived among fine people, she retained to the last the privilege of yawning in some great houses on gala days. But she saw that the young and the handsome only were the fashion: she had ceased to be young, she had no daughter to take about, for whose sake she might have learned to put up with the airs of young men, and the occasional impertinence of young women. The whole system was different to what it had been in her day, and she, of course, thought it changed for the worse.

Accordingly the house in town was sold, and Hubert had to seek a lodging, which he rather looked upon as a grievance.

He went, however, and was even amused more than he could have believed possible at the moment. He mounted his horse at General Parry's door, and kissed his hand to the group in the drawing-room window, who re-echoed his farewell.

In his first joy at seeing Ellen after so long an absence, he could hardly keep to his resolution of showing nothing but friendliness. He did not then perceive that though kindly received by every one, there was a shade of difference in the manners of General and Mrs. Parry; and when the discovery was made, it astonished and grieved him. He soon ascertained that there had been no coolness between them and his family in his absence. At any other time he would have been affronted, and readily have given up people who had cooled towards him; but Ellen could be seen only at her father's, and Ellen was not so easily to be given up. He took his resolution at once, and determined to make Augusta explain every thing. In this he did not succeed. Augusta knew nothing, or would acknowledge nothing. She

said he was a great favourite with her father and mother, and she saw not the change of which he complained. He affected to be satisfied, and inwardly hoped Ellen might be more communicative. To see her alone, however, was next to impossible. He tried many ways without success.

He resolved, therefore, on a bold step. The Parrys were to dine at the Park in a few days; Ellen, he knew, would stay at home. He ordered his horse to be in readiness, and leaving the dinner-table shortly after the ladies, galloped off to General Parry's. He tied his horse to a stile leading into his plantation, meaning to enter the house unannounced, by the door that opened into the garden. He had to pass the pavilion, and, as he approached, he was startled by sounds of music. He came near cautiously, and, himself concealed by a thick bush, beheld Ellen at her harp, or rather at Augusta's, for she never played but when alone. Hubert thought he had never seen her graceful figure to such advantage, or her beautiful hand and arm so much displayed. She sang, and as the roof of the building was peculiarly favourable to sound, and, in the belief of being unheard, she gave her voice full

scope, her performance might have delighted one less disposed to be pleased. As for De Lisle, he could have listened for ever, but, knowing he would never have such another opportunity of speaking to Ellen, he did not choose to lose it quite.

Fearful of alarming her, he retreated a few steps, and called and whistled to a dog at a distance. The music stopped directly; and still calling "Cato, Cato!" he went up to the door of the pavilion. Ellen was standing at the entrance, and on seeing it was really De Lisle (for she would not believe the voice), she imagined something had happened to her father. He soon reassured her, and apologising for so abrupt a visit, said "he had but a few words to say, and, could he have found any other moment, would not have so cavalierly intruded on her solitude." Ellen, with a look of cold surprise, sat down in silence, and he proceeded rapidly to state "with what regret he would give up an intimacy with her family, and yet how indispensable it would be, unless the cordiality, he might almost say the affection, of other times was resumed."

"I know not," said Miss Parry, "why, so questioned, I should conceal the fact. My father and his wife really love you, but they

love their daughter better. You must know enough of the world to be aware, that a young man who has no serious intentions, cannot dangle after a girl without doing her an injury, that is to say, without preventing eligible people, more in earnest, from presenting themselves. My father has a large family. Augusta's beauty seemed to secure her making a good marriage. Should they sacrifice that hope because it amuses you to flirt with her?"

"Surely not: I could have no such desire;—but cannot you undertake to promise that I will never flirt with her again? You might do it safely."

"May be so; but I cannot promise that she would never flirt with you. It is her way, and there is no harm done while you come to our house no more than other young men. It would be difficult, too, for you to change an established manner, and more difficult to persuade the world at large that it was changed."

"So, then, I am condemned, and you tell me so with more indifference than if your father had decided on banishing a cat."

Ellen smiled. "A noble comparison, indeed! but what can I do in the matter?"

"You might be sorry, at least."

"I am sorry, very sorry, that you do not love Augusta ; and sorry, as you do not, that we can see so little of you."

Hubert fixed his eyes upon her relaxing countenance, and taking her hand he said, in a low voice, "And should Augusta consent to be my wife, would Ellen receive me as a brother ? Become one of that family to which she has bounded her attachments, might I hope that she would love me ?"

Ellen lifted up her tearful eyes with an expression of so much pleasure and tenderness, that Hubert forgot all his prudent resolves,—
"My beloved," he exclaimed, "will you not speak to me ? will you not say you could love me ?"

"You cannot doubt my affection, so soon as I may be permitted to feel it."

"Permitted ! who is to permit you ? who should now prevent you ?"

"Hubert, you are making a strange jumble of words and sentiments. We are speaking of my sister. If you love her, I cannot see what prevents your proposing to her ; and if you do not, I cannot wish you to engage yourself, though my own happiness would doubtless be much augmented by your becoming a legitimate object of attachment to me."

“And why should I not now be a legitimate object of attachment? Ellen, can you not feel why I cannot marry Augusta? Do you not see why I want nothing of her, but that she may be *my* sister, since she is yours?”

Miss Parry started and coloured—she looked up anxiously, but her eye sank on meeting Hubert's, the expression of which did indeed correspond but too well with the tone of undisguised tenderness in which he had addressed her. He watched eagerly the struggling feelings that passed over her countenance, like hurrying clouds that flit athwart the moon and obscure her silvery light; but he was not prepared to see grief rise, as it were, superior to all other emotions, and quench with tears the brightness that a few moments before shed a chaste and fitful splendour on every feature. She threw her arms over the marble table near which she sat, and buried her face upon them, but her tears fell over them, and her slender frame seemed almost convulsed, though not a sound of complaint escaped her.

“Ellen!” he cried, “for the love of Heaven, speak to me—what means this grief? Is it terror?—is it hatred?”

She seemed to make a great effort to attain something like composure; and lifting herself

partly up repeated, "Terror! what should I fear?—Hatred! whom should I hate?—Not you," she added more collectedly, "who deserve so much more than I can give."

"I deserve nothing—I ask nothing now. In time, when my affection has ceased to scare or to grieve you, I will leave it to your generosity what return to make to a devotion that knows no bounds."

"No, it does not scare me; but, alas! it never can fail to give me pain. My dear Hubert, you are young—very young, and I know that this unfortunate predilection not meeting with the encouragement it might so naturally expect, will soon die a natural death—but still, just now, it is hard upon you;" and her tears again began to flow, and she unconsciously rested her head against the arm that so gladly supported her.

"Do not agitate yourself any longer, my dear Ellen—some other time you shall tell me what is the unaccountable barrier between us—till then, I will hope it may be removed."

"There is no mortal hand can remove it," she said gloomily.—"I have vowed, and my oath is registered in higher annals than ours. I have not the power of loving, but if I worshipped you

fondly as ever did zealous votary kneeling to the shrine of her patron saint, it would not avail you. My lot in life is cast, and I would not complain of it, nay I dare not, since I myself made the fate that clings to me, if I suffered alone. But what have *you* done to be involved in my destiny?"

"I cannot understand, if you really feel for me, why you will not make one vigorous effort to throw off what must be a superstitious feeling. You know not the numbers you would make happy by forgetting your own past and embellishing my future existence. If you disappoint me there where disappointment is most felt, you must answer it to my mother, whose hopes of seeing her only child happily married will be annihilated. I cannot love every one I see; I can still less easily esteem as I do you. All the good you might do as my wife, all the happiness you would be certain to confer, you become responsible for omitting."

Ellen smiled through her tears. "Forgive me, my dear Hubert, if I am so old that the language of romance sounds strangely in my ears. It is not at three or four-and-twenty that men cease to love, or are in any great danger of not marrying, because their early fancies are neither pru-

dent nor successful. My own conscience acquits me of having done aught that could excite your present regard : still I regret it deeply ; for as I cannot explain my reasons, you have a right to think your confidence has been misplaced. Why would you seek out one who sought the shade? There is no mystery without guilt ; no concealment without something to conceal that should never have been done. If you would try those around you by the only sure test, that of principle, you would be deceived only where every noble mind would wish to be deceived, from an incomprehensibility of baseness."

" But in trusting to you I had surely nothing to reproach myself with. The more I studied you, the more admirable I found you. I cannot repent having so fixed my affections, though I may lament that you reject them."

" You will not barely lament, you will resent it. You will say to yourself, her conduct is both unnatural and unreasonable. You will learn to mistrust all but the giddy and the frivolous, through whose nothingness of character you can penetrate at once. This is the mischief that, with your disposition, I am doing you ; and this is what I regret even more than your momentary pang of disappointment.

" It is true, that if you have no other attach-

ment, and you feel any interest for me, this utter rejection is incomprehensible."

"I am aware it must be so—all I can ask is, that you will trust to my word, which I do not give lightly, that it cannot be otherwise. I believe your wife is likely to be a very happy woman, and I would not quarrel with so fair a chance of happiness, if by any possibility it could be mine. But I repeat it, I cannot become the wife of any one, without militating against my ideas of duty. I know it is unfair to expect from you submission to an unrevealed feeling:—at the same time you must do me the justice to acknowledge, that I never sought to mislead or interest you. In many ways you had a claim on me, associated as you were with my early days, and with that dear brother, who alone was dearer to me than yourself. I did not indulge myself by avowing a regard you might have mistaken for something more tender. I stood aloof, and did all that coldness and neglect could do, to teach you I would not be loved."

"But I thought I could see through all this into your natural temper. I thought affection, unbounded exclusive affection, was necessary to you."

"Not necessary, since you see I live without

it. It is a luxury of felicity, which vanishes with the illusions of early youth."

"Can no time, no circumstances, change my doom?"

"None, that I may be allowed to anticipate."

"Think again, Ellen, before you send me forth a solitary and blighted wanderer, into a world of which I am already weary."

"Oh! would that any thought could prevent it! Yet go not forth, I implore you, with such false views of the world and of yourself: there are in life moments of anguish, to which all you now feel bear no more comparison, than does the weakness of man to the power of God. Cradled in luxury, enervated by indulgence, your feelings, like a nerve that is bare, lie open to the touch. Every thing bruises, every thing rubs against them. In a world in whose welfare you are uninterested, you will only become more fastidious, and end by being selfish. It would be the ruin of a fine character, and would give me more pain than any thing I know."

"How easily might you prevent it! What is there you might not teach me to think and feel? You might even make me religious."

"Do you hold out that hope as a bribe to me? It would have much weight under other

circumstances with many, but not with me, who believe that it is only God who can make us religious."

"But there are instruments of good as of evil; and what nobler instruments could there be in a righteous cause, than the friend I have lost, and she who now eludes my grasp, and is to me almost as shadowy a being?"

"If Lionel failed, why should you think I might succeed? Delude not yourself; in your own heart must spring up the wish, and the power will be added to it—but not by mortal means, or human influence. My prayers you shall have as fervently when at a distance, as if you were before me to hear them."

"At a distance! then you enforce the tacit punishment of your father, and will not even repay my love with the scanty boon of friendship! I would try and content myself with that."

"You would try in vain,—love can be repaid only by itself. To extinguish it at once is all that remains for you; and we need meet so seldom, so very seldom, that your task will soon be got through."

"Ellen, if it must be so, I will not do it by halves. I will go abroad again, and never see

you but in my dreams, till this irksome feeling is quenched at once."

"Go in peace, and be thankful that your lot is not as mine, and that you have not made those who were dear to you suffer."

"It is growing dusk, and I shall be missed at home. Will you walk with me through the plantation? It will be always too soon to say farewell!"

Hubert had made the proposal thinking it would not be agreed to, in which case he would have had an excuse for the bitterness that overflowed his spirit. But he was mistaken: Ellen assented without hesitation; she walked as slowly as he could desire; she soothed him by her gentleness, she affected him by her sadness. All his asperity was softened down, but his regrets increased in proportion as his loss appeared greater. He reached the place where his horse was secured, and felt that he had but another moment, and that he touched the crisis of his fate. He could not utter the adieu that trembled at his heart: he looked at his companion, who, faint and weeping, seemed nearly as much agitated as himself. Encouraged by her distress, he supported her in his arms, and once more returned to the charge.

"We might be so happy!" he said, in the broken voice of entreaty.

"No! we could not be happy, for we should be doing wrong. Hubert! may a blessing greater than mine rest upon you! May God bless you! and then you will be as happy hereafter as you are amiable here."

To so solemn an adieu, nothing could be added. Hubert kissed the cold hand that motioned his departure, sprang over the stile, then upon his horse's back, and urged him unconsciously up the hill that rose above the plantation. He paused at the top, and looked back. In the faint twilight he could still distinguish the shadowy form of Ellen—her white robe fluttered in the breeze, her low sigh was still in his ear—he could fancy she waved him another adieu, when suddenly the gathering shades of night deepened, and the indistinct figure was confounded with other forms, and lost in the blue haze of distance. He watched its vanishing with a superstitious pang at his heart. He fancied that shrouds and darkness would for ever cover all he loved. He beheld himself as a being struggling with his destiny, who had no power to bid the conflict cease, though the consciousness was there that he

must eventually be overcome. He armed his haughty spirit and nerved his proud heart to bear calmly what must be borne at last. He no longer felt the balmy influence of Ellen's tenderness and piety. He could have lain down by the road-side and wept, but he scorned the thought of bending to the storm he had provoked, and the tears he would not shed fell back on his aching heart, till it felt sore and blistered.

He reached the Park a very short time after the gentlemen had adjourned to coffee, and before Sir Francis had missed him. As he entered the room, Augusta's jocund laugh grated on his ear, and her gay welcome thrilled painfully through all his pulses.

"I want you so much, Mr. De Lisle," she said, "to second my request. I think I have almost made a convert of Sir Francis, but I must have your vote, or I shall make nothing of Lady De Lisle."

"You have my vote," said Hubert abstractedly.

"I am glad to hear it—you know, then, it is for a ball."

"Yes, I see—that is, I know you like dancing."

"And these rooms," continued Augusta, not marking his inattention, "are so well suited ; such a fine supper-room, without crowding and crushing upon staircases, and such a pretty vestibule between the ball-room and refreshment-room, where quiet flirts may pass a pleasant evening. I will try and make Ellen come, though I fear I shall never see her in another fancy dress, or take her in to dance as I did at Barrymore Hall."

De Lisle did not wince, but he felt Ellen's name like a sudden blow. He summoned all his resolution, and said with a vacant smile, "No other inducement than your presence can be necessary to induce my mother to open her house. You shall certainly have my support, which is very disinterested, as I shall not be here to claim your hand as my reward."

"Not here ! why, you are not going to Spain again to visit your nun ?"

"No ; but I believe to Italy. It is not a country to be overlooked."

"Any country rather than your own, Mr. De Lisle !"

"It is a fair reproach, and I fear a true one. I have a sad wandering turn !"

"Not sad, if you find amusement in it ;" and

Augusta obeyed the call to the piano-forte with a countenance as unmoved as if she had heard he was going to ride into the adjacent county. This, perhaps, was rather an effort, for she was sorry to lose his attentions and conversation ; but she was too proud to betray a regret he appeared so little inclined to share, and half resented his announcing his intention in so abrupt and unconcerned a way. She little knew that his spirit quailed beneath the necessity of his departure ; and that when the carriage that contained her drove off, he hated himself for parting without one kind word from persons who were at that moment dearer to him than ever he had thought them before.

CHAPTER X.

SIR Francis and Lady De Lisle heard their son announce his intended journey with surprise and dismay. But he glossed it over so well, talked so slightly of the plan, and appeared to think the execution would be so rapid, that they tried to grow reconciled to what it was evident they could not prevent. De Lisle paid a few farewell visits, wrote a hasty adieu to General Parry, in which the ladies of his family were with a trembling hand included ; and promising his mother that at the first hint of a dissolution of Parliament he would return, he threw himself into his travelling carriage, and was in London almost before he felt quite sure whither he would go first. The difficulty of getting passports to Italy, as we were at war with her sovereign, the French Emperor, interfered with his plans. He decided at last on

taking ship for Sicily, and getting a passport from thence as an American.

He was so busy, and had so many things to arrange, that he had little leisure for reflection. He neither looked nor felt happy, but he at least escaped all definite pain. He had an expeditious passage, and knew he should find in the island several acquaintance among the English military. We had at that time undertaken to defend and protect the country—a protection which no other nation will in future be desirous of, so long, at least, as the base surrender of Sicily is remembered. De Lisle saw much to admire, both in picturesque beauty and splendour of building; but he was taken more out than he liked: and anxious to see Naples and Rome during the fine weather, and so get to Florence for the winter, he made but a short stay in the island.

Once in Italy, he forgot himself and his own trifling concerns, and could listen only to the voice of ages, that spoke in every noble ruin he passed, and, to his unaccustomed eye, in the very garb of the peasantry. The vestiges of colossal grandeur everywhere struck his fancy and seized on his imagination. He could find traces of edifices, but none of character; *that*

had perished, and the dastardly Neapolitan, the treacherous Italian, brought to his mind no one trait of the noble Roman, the brave, the magnanimous, the heroic! Their memory had passed away, and the sons of little men, as Ossian would have called them, had so far degenerated from their great ancestors, that their glory shone brighter in the eyes of a stranger, than it did in theirs.

Charmed with the country, and disgusted with its inhabitants, De Lisle turned in thought to the land he had left, and which now he felt he had underrated. He was not without national pride, but it was of no blind and prejudiced sort. He did not persuade himself that an Englishman was necessarily a better man than his neighbours, but he knew that while their laws were better, their government more free, and their religion more tolerant, they would continue their superiority collectively, however unamiable individuals might be. The dreadful degeneracy of the Italians was a lesson he never forgot. It taught him how much depended on good government, and how deep corruption might reach that began at the fountain-head. He had believed this in England; he felt it in Rome, which he quitted with some-

thing of the sensation with which a man comes out of a splendid catacomb.

He spent a cheerful winter in Florence, and with the first days of spring crossed the country to Venice, from whence, sailing down the Gulf, he came back to Palermo, where he had promised to meet a foreign acquaintance. He found on arriving that he had been the only one to keep his appointment. Family reasons had interfered with the wishes of the other, and these, briefly stated in a letter, were the apology for his failure which greeted Hubert on landing. His wish now was to reach England, but he found he should have to wait a month before a packet to Malta could receive him. Like all persons who have nothing to do, he became impatient of delay, and, instead of making up his mind to wait quietly for the first chance in his favour, he agreed to accompany the captain of a neutral vessel on a cruise to Egypt. He had first, however, to go to Rome; and De Lisle debated whether he would accompany him thither, or await the possibility of his picking him up in his way back. At last he determined it would be more convenient to embark at once; which he did, and was shortly landed at Civita Vecchia. There was so little to tempt

his remaining there, that he gladly accompanied his captain to Rome, having some anti-quarian acquaintance in that place, some things yet to see, and many more that would bear the seeing twice.

One day when he was wandering in the environs of the city, he came in sight of a group of cottages, and remembered, when last there, how much he had been pleased in witnessing a rustic dance in that very spot. He entered one of the cottages, and inquired for her who had been the principal ornament of the festive scene.

“Alas!” replied the person he addressed, “there is no more dancing for poor Cornelia. The banditti came down from the hills in the night, burned several of the cottages, and carried away their inhabitants, in the hope that the poor would work for them, and the rich be ransomed. Cornelia was at a neighbour’s house: when she returned in the morning, her home was a pile of smoking ashes, and her parents carried away. Her wits nearly left her, poor thing! but she dragged out of the ruins a little brother the barbarians had left to perish, and nursed him tenderly, and begged for him piteously, for we were all too poor to do much

for her. The child died at last, and was buried this morning ; and Cornelia is lying on his grave, and refuses the nourishment we have offered her."

This was a tale a less feeling heart than De Lisle's could not have listened to with indifference. He asked for a guide to the spot, and soon perceived at a distance the prostrate form of the youthful mourner. Attracted by the pleasing manners and beauty of her whole family, he had often visited their cabin, and delighted to make the little boy Cornelia was now lamenting, sit on his knee, and sing to him. A fine voice is a common gift among the lower orders in Italy, but one so rich and sweet as that child's, Hubert had never heard : he preferred it to the clearer and more powerful tones of Cornelia herself, and when blended together he could have listened half the evening to them. As he came near, he called her by her name, but she neither spoke nor moved. He lifted her up, and tried to attract her attention ; but her half-closed eye drooped heavily downwards, and her long black hair swept the fresh-made grave, as she reclined powerless, but not inanimate, from the arm that had raised her.

The atmosphere of that part of the country

is peculiarly insalubrious in the summer season ; and De Lisle feared Cornelia could never have lain on the ground through the heat of mid-day, without putting her life in considerable danger. Every attempt to rouse her seemed abortive—she shrank from his grasp, and again buried her face in the earth. He spoke in vain of her parents and her home ; she heard him not. He remembered a song which had been a favourite with her brother's, and tried the effect of singing a few words of it. That sound reached her heart ; she started wildly up, flung back the dark curls that covered her face, and gazed keenly round her. At first she did not recognize De Lisle, but when she did, with a cry of mingled feelings, she sprang forward and embraced his knees.

“Stranger,” she cried, “whence come you ? Never more to be the harbinger of joy to poor Cornelia ! The threshold gladdened by your step, you can cross no more—the spirits cheered by your kindness and your affluence, are now beyond your reach ; and he who loved you and sang to you can never, never sing again !” and tearing up the fresh sods, she scattered the earth around her, and gave way to a paroxysm of grief that made De Lisle regret the

stupor from which he had roused her. He did not, however, relax in his exertions; and his gentle soothings, and the hope he held out that her parents might yet be ransomed, brought some relief to the violence of her sorrow. With infinite difficulty he led her back to the house she had quitted in the morning, and having seen her swallow a small portion of nourishment, and amply compensated her indigent hostess, he returned to the city to make inquiries respecting the mode of ascertaining the fate of her parents. The person who was to negotiate the business, seemed sanguine of success; but De Lisle's captain could not await the result. He was annoyed at first, but remembering that in fact he did not care about the little he could see of Egypt in that way, and that it would be inhuman to abandon these unfortunate peasants, he made other arrangements, and had the pleasure to see that his endeavour to calm the half-frantic Cornelia had in part succeeded. He told her of his change of plan, and rejoiced to see a faint colour revisit her cheek, and a flash of animation dart from her speaking eye.

"And have you," she cried with enthusiasm, "done this for me? When did the great

and the affluent watch before for the poor and destitute ! Generous Englishman, I vowed on my brother's grave to love nothing on earth, that I might not again survive the object of my love ; but *you* can change all my resolves !"

Time passed on, and Cornelia seemed more reconciled to her fate : her sadness had become more touching than vehement, and as she had not counted sixteen summers, Hubert hoped the shock would wear off, and the elastic spirit of youth recover its tone. At last his messenger returned, but brought no comfort—the parents of Cornelia had been removed far up the country, and all trace of them was lost. De Lisle perceived he had been deluded from the beginning, and thought it not improbable that those he had so liberally paid, had never attempted to further his wishes ; but he had no redress, and all that remained to be done was to break the disappointment in the gentlest way he could to Cornelia, and, leaving her some provision, quit the country at once.

She heard what he had to say with a calmness so unnatural to her ardent temper, that it appalled him. He tried to make her look forward to the time when they might be liberated, and return to her ; but she turned away with a

smile of scorn on her deathlike features. He spoke of resignation, since hope was dead within her, but she answered quickly, "The worm that is crushed, dies in silence. Oh, you know not how easy it is to die! when you are no longer there, I shall have but to close my eyes, and repose will come. You alone keep up the warmth of life in my heart: depart, and the chill of forgetfulness will be upon it!"

De Lisle tried to make her understand that he was a foreigner, and must return to his own country.

"I know it," she answered quietly; "I ask nothing of you but your blessing, and that you will order me a place beside my brother."

"I have taken care to provide better for you; and when, at some future time, I revisit Rome, I shall hope to find you happier."

"I have no future," she replied; "your presence is my present, and your absence is the blank which will reduce me to its own nothingness!"

De Lisle was vexed and annoyed. He knew no one at Rome who would watch over this blighted flower; he could place her in no secure situation, where she would be treated with gentleness till her mind and body had recovered

their strength. She clung to him with the thousand ties helplessness and devotedness fix on the heart where humanity and kindness dwell.

He lingered from day to day, in the hope of finding her more reasonable ; but she grew only more feeble and incoherent.

“ Cornelia,” said he one day, “ would you like to go to England, and become a part of my mother’s household ?”

She lifted her dark eye in wild inquiry, and repeated, “ To England ! Not, surely, with you ?”

“ None else could convey you thither, unfortunately.”

“ Unfortunately !” she re-echoed, reproachfully. “ But I will not complain. I have worn out your bounty. Depart, stranger ! depart in peace. I would not tax the heart that is weary of me ;” and hiding her face in her lap, she burst into tears.

He could not bear to add a pang to a heart already so oppressed. He tenderly soothed her ; and explained, that he regretted her having no female protector or companion on her account, and not on his own.

“ Do not deceive me,” she said, fixing an

earnest look upon him ; “ if I go to a land of strangers, and leave the country that even in my hopeless wretchedness I view with tenderness—if I am never more to hear the music of Italian words, nor to gaze on yon cloudless sky, shall I see you in your mother’s house? Or will you leave me to die on a distant shore, when I would so much rather lay my bones here in peace, where first I drew my breath?”

“ I am not always at home,” said De Lisle, “ but I am so frequently, and then you will see me; and my mother will be kind to you, Cornelia, and you will love her for my sake.”

“ What would I not love for your sake!” she exclaimed; and Hubert averted his eye from the kindling beauty of hers. He felt, for the first time, he was doing more than an imprudent action, and he repented the offer he had made. But how could he now retract? Since he saw the danger, he believed he could guard against it; and proud of his principles, secure in his own strength, he sailed for Genoa, with his young and too beautiful companion.

He laboured to make her understand those rules of decorum, the breach of which in England would subject her to so much suspicion; but untutored as she was, full of unrestrained

enthusiasm and sensibility, she reaped little instruction from their numerous conversations on the subject. He sometimes purposely left her to be assisted by his servant; but his heart smote him when he saw the gentle sadness with which she bore neglect, and the docility with which she conformed to his wishes, when most incomprehensible and unpleasing to herself. He wondered often what his mother could find to employ her in. Her poetical mode of expressing herself, her foreign air, her luxuriant beauty, seemed to unfit her for a menial situation; yet in what rank of society could a peasant girl be placed? Her natural powers of mind and of feeling were so great, that he longed to see so fertile a soil cultivated; but he was aware the task was not for him. The simplicity of her questions for ever astonished him, who had never associated with the ignorant; but, though untaught, they were not silly, and often betrayed a depth and originality of thought, infinitely more attractive than the more hacknied knowledge of well-educated woman.

De Lisle had hoped at Genoa to find some merchant-vessel directly, that would set him on his way home; for he felt the increasing danger of

his situation, and the charm of Cornelia's boundless attachment, even more than that of her personal beauty. But, in the first place, he was confined in the Lazaretto, the ship he came in having, on some suspicion, to perform quarantine; and on being released, his servant, who was a Frenchman, thought fit to leave him, and he had another to seek.

These delays were fatal to all Hubert's good resolutions. Each passing moment he found himself so necessary to Cornelia, that she became at last necessary to him. He ceased to restrain the expressions of her enthusiastic tenderness—he even listened to them with pleasure. Cornelia innocently believed herself a greater object of interest in his eyes at the moment when he was forgetting her welfare, and yielding to the infatuation he had determined to resist. If she was happy in her ignorance, so was not he. In his sort of attachment there were no illusions. He despised his own weakness; he despised his easy conquest. He had made himself responsible for her destiny, and more than doubled the difficulty of providing for her. In this state of irresolution he ceased to inquire how he should reach home; for, when there, he could no longer ask of his mother to take charge

of Cornelia; he could not always keep her with him; and yet to leave her alone, in a country of which she did not understand the language, would be barbarous. To marry her was impossible. He had altered since the days when he would have given his name to Madame de Lausanne: he had seen more of the world; he had learnt to rely less on affection: he had clearer ideas of the necessary distinction of rank. He could not present to his family an uneducated peasant girl. He did not for a moment dwell on the idea.

Thérèse, by an artful insinuation of an attachment that did not exist, had gained the greatest influence over him; Cornelia, by the lavish extravagance of a genuine passion, nearly neutralized the effect her loveliness and truth produced. He was so sorry for her, he half persuaded himself he loved her; yet, in fact, he dreaded a separation much more for her sake than for his own. He was loth to pierce the heart that trusted him, by coming to any explanation; and put off therefore, from week to week, and month to month, the leaving Genoa. At last, a letter from home roused him. His father had been ill, and, though recovering, was feeble and much broken, and most anxious for

his return. He could delay it no longer, and Cornelia must go too, since he knew not what else to do with her.

Just at this time he heard, at a house where he was dining, an account to which at first he hardly listened, but some familiar names at last captivated his attention, when he found that the Abbess of Santa Maria was dead, and the Bishop who had before claimed the right of election, had made it good for the alternate times; and fearful of giving offence, before his power was thoroughly submitted to, by raising any of his own family, he had named a foreigner. From what De Lisle could gather, there seemed no doubt but that this foreigner was Isabella Seymour. The thought instantly struck him that if he could prevail on Cornelia to become a pensioner there, time and absence would moderate her attachment to him; and Isabella's judicious management, even if it failed in swaying her so far as to excite a wish to take the veil, could not but have the most beneficial effects. The more he thought of the plan, the more he was pleased with it, as the delay occasioned by taking her there, would be nothing in comparison of the embarrassment

saved by not making her his companion to England.

The hour chosen for explaining to Cornelia that they must part, was a bitter one. She listened at first uneasily, then in agony, and finally in silent despair. He gazed on those dark eyes, the brilliancy and tenderness of which he had so often admired, now fixed and rayless ; he beheld her rich ruby lips blanched and compressed together in the conflict of mental anguish ; and he felt that momentary pleasure had been too dearly purchased. In vain he would have soothed her by the kindest expressions or the gentlest caresses—she was insensible to both.

“ My beloved Cornelia !” he said at last, “ do you take me for a tyrant ? Do you suppose I would force you into a convent, and abandon you there ? You shall not go at all if you dislike it ; but it would be a more comfortable and respectable asylum for you than any I could find in England.”

“ Comfortable !” murmured she, “ away from you ! do not deceive yourself ; you can no longer deceive me. It is not for me that exile is good ; but I see it is so for you, and I submit.”

She looked up, and perceiving a gathering tear in his eye, she threw her arms around him, and in a tone of more emotion exclaimed—
“Spare me those precious tears! I would not be so embalmed in death!”

“But you must not die, my Cornelia! You shall go with me to England.”

“That you might *see* me die! Believe me, that would make the only difference.”

“If you do not like your residence at Santa Maria, I will come over and take you thence myself. The Abbess is my friend, and will treat you kindly. You may acquire the instruction you so eagerly pursue, and gain resources to make solitude less irksome to you when you come to England. If I have time, I may find out some situation in my own country where you might lead a blameless and unsuspected life.”

“I see we must part. It would have been sweet to breathe the same air, to gaze on the same scenes with you—to see you sometimes at a distance, and hear your friends and countrymen applaud you; but if it cannot be, we will not talk of it;” and she lifted her beautiful eyes to his, and gazed at him through her tears with an expression of tenderness, that could not

struggle against his faintest wish. Her submission and confidence wounded him to the soul ; but he really thought the plan the best for her as well as for himself ; and he did not, therefore, give it up, though its execution, he found, was attended with considerable difficulty, and would also take more time than he wished.

CHAPTER XI.

DE LISLE took the first opportunity of a trader going to Lisbon, to secure a passage for himself and his companion. From thence he coasted it to St. Sebastian, and as Biscay was, fortunately for him, not the seat of war at that moment, he met with few obstacles between that and Salvatiera, and none from thence to Santa Maria. He could not help thinking, as he caught the first glimpse of the monastery, that if the Spanish merchant had misled him, and that, instead of Isabella, he should find only the lady who had been so willing to dismiss him some few years before, he should have been taking a long round for nothing. He asked, however, boldly for the Lady Abbess, and had not waited many minutes at the grate, before the sister of his friends made her appearance, looking so exactly as she had done when he last saw her in company with her brothers, that he could

have fancied the time that had intervened a mere dream. Their conversation was long, and embraced many topics; but Isabella, when the last was discussed, evidently disliked the notion of receiving Cornelia as a boarder. With her station in life De Lisle acquainted Isabella, and the only part of her story he omitted, the Abbess easily gathered from other circumstances.

"I will think of it," she said, "and consult my director."

"Are you superior of this community, and yet cannot take upon yourself to receive a Catholic orphan, by whose means your house may be enriched?"

Isabella smiled with more archness than he thought her features could express, and answered, "Your last argument is a weighty one, and very apt to be conclusive. It might sway me if Cornelia was to enter on her noviciate; but if I understand you aright, you would place her here only for protection and education, with a view one day of withdrawing her. Now, you may say it is no concern of mine what becomes of her afterwards; but you must pardon me if I do not choose to protect and instruct a young girl who, so far from wishing to dedicate her natural beauty and acquired accom-

plishments to her Maker, would only be waiting the first opportunity of re-appearing in the world, where, it is to be feared, her life will not reflect honour on any one."

"You do not, I hope, suspect me of so base and profligate a plan. I wish her to be educated for her own sake, not for mine. It would be easy at a future time to engage some female to take her from hence, supposing that she herself wishes to remove, which I hope she may not, as mortification must ever await her in England; though not insult, as would be the case at this moment, were she to return with me."

"Then if I refused your request there would be no means of providing for her, either in her own country or in yours?"

"I have taken her from her own country, and it would be barbarous to send her back, especially as I could not return with her. In England her character could be saved only by my marrying her. I am not inclined to make so great a sacrifice, or to mortify and wound my parents so deeply."

"Since," said the Abbess coldly, she has no justice to expect from you, she shall receive mercy from me. Go and fetch her."

De Lisle was too much rejoiced at getting

Isabella's consent in any way, to resent the manner of it. He went out for Cornelia, and anxiously watched the countenance of the Abbess as he presented the beautiful Italian. He could however discern in it neither admiration nor compassion; but he thought, by the gentle tone in which she addressed her, that she must have felt both. "You are desirous, I find," was her first remark, "to become a boarder at Santa Maria?"

"Desirous!" murmured Cornelia, with a half glance towards Hubert.

"I mean, do you think it right? I cannot admit a person against her will. This house is no prison."

"I am willing," said Cornelia, faintly.

"But not to take the vows?"

Tears sprang to her eyes as she answered, "I am not willing; but I know not why, for the world to me is but a more roomy prison."

"Then I will hope," said the Abbess gravely, "you will soon feel it is no sacrifice to quit it. In the mean time, you are received here as a boarder for so long as you choose."

"I do not choose," said Cornelia; "so long as Mr. De Lisle chooses."

"So long then as he chooses and you consent. I will give orders that the gates may be unclosed

to admit you now, and to-morrow you may bid Mr. De Lisle farewell. It is late at present, and Father Francis will gladly lodge him once more;" and Isabella could not wholly repress a sigh as she remembered who lodged there with him before.

When the Abbess had withdrawn, Cornelia, who felt that her fate was sealed, wiped away the few tears that hung on her cheek, and calmly asked Hubert if he wished her to take the veil. He was vehement against such a sacrifice.

"Sacrifice of what?" said she, somewhat impatiently:—"do I not lose you, and does there remain to me any thing more that I could sacrifice? I used to dread a cloister, because confinement is unnatural and gloomy; but slight evils give way before greater ones. I will overcome my reluctance, if it will give you pleasure. There is nothing hard to do for those we love."

"My dearest Cornelia I can have no pleasure in making you miserable."

"Indeed!" uttered Cornelia, in a low and bitter tone; then, as if fearful of wounding him, she added, "Perhaps I should not be so *very* miserable; but we shall see;" and when presently after she was summoned to enter the

convent, she took leave of Hubert with a degree of quietness he little expected from one whose feelings were so vivid and so uncontrolled. Relieved at being spared the witnessing any turbulent grief, he would not see that despair had chilled her heart; and though such unnatural stillness gave him pain, he was thankful that she gave way to no wilder emotion.

In proportion as he got farther from Santa Maria, and nearer home, his compunctious visitings became fewer. As the last look of despondent tenderness, given him by his young and beautiful victim, faded from his memory, the hope arose that she would yet be happy. If deep-rooted attachment increases with absence, slighter and more ordinary affections fade beneath its influence. Thus it was with Hubert, who, soon ceasing to be sad himself, tried to think time would have the same effect on her. It seemed very unlikely that when she had reconciled herself to her new abode, and become acquainted with her companions, she would wish to leave it for a place where she had no one attraction but himself, and where he was fully determined, for his own sake, to see her as little as possible.

He breathed with a freer spirit as he thought his difficulties at an end, and her situation better than if he had never met with her ; for even if her affection for him was a misfortune now, she had owed to it months of rapturous, delirious felicity. He forgot that the contrast did but make her present lot more bitter ; and that in proportion to the illusions she had indulged, was the agony of the waking moment. He strove, in short, to forget every thing it would have been painful to remember, and he did not strive in vain. In England there was much to occupy him. His father had fallen, after his dangerous illness, into a state but little removed from childishness. He could not be induced to give up the management of his affairs to any one, and yet of course mismanaged them himself. Tenants, agents, every one looked to young De Lisle, who had never before interfered with any thing. In the first moments of leisure, after his arrival at the Park, Lady De Lisle gave him an account of all that had taken place in his absence in their immediate neighbourhood. She passed lightly over the deaths of some, and the marriages of others, and at last said,

“ I need tell you nothing of the Parrys, for

I must have written you word how gay they have been, and how well General Parry has established his two daughters."

"Indeed you did not; but I heard in town: one was married to Captain Seymour; Augusta, I suppose. I never should have thought Jane old enough."

"Jane is not married. It is Ellen, and to Lord Avondale."

The colour rose to Hubert's temples, and there was a strong and no pleasing sensation at his heart as he repeated "Ellen! and to Lord Avondale!"

"What is surprising you so much? Lord Avondale's wife was not immortal, and a year after her death he proposed to Ellen, who was, they say, his first love. So he was constant, as men are sometimes, with a few intermediate attachments. As the song says, '*On revient toujours à son premier amour.*'"

"Only in a song," said De Lisle, "for I am sure I could never go back to what I had forgotten. I hate *réchauffés*."

"So, you see, did not Lord Avondale. The weddings took place together—it was a pretty sight. The brides looked lovely: Augusta blushing and weeping, half happy, and half miserable;

and Ellen always herself, cold and calm, and, except that you saw she prayed, apparently uninterested in all around her."

Lady De Lisle might have gone on for the next hour without the smallest fear of interruption from her son. He had said all he could say; and when she left the room, he snatched up his hat and plunged into the thickest plantation and most gloomy walk he could find, to reflect at leisure. "So, so," repeated he quickly to himself, "she is married! She who could never marry!—she, who had given up the world, makes at last a worldly marriage! Ellen, Ellen, why did you too deceive me?" He sat down on a bench, and, covering his face with his hand, taxed his memory to recall every the most minute particular connected with her. Though it had of late been a hidden store, it did not the less exist. He repeated to himself her own observation, "There is no mystery without guilt; and he imagined the guilt of which she accused herself was a passion for an unworthy object, and for the husband of another. It was true, she appeared neither to love nor to esteem him; but she had married him, and facts were stronger than appearances. What availed the talents or the piety of Ellen Parry? High-minded and

high principled he had thought her—had he then been mistaken? Was she, whose self-command he had so often admired, the victim of so weak and degraded a passion as love without respect? Could she be religious, whose sense of duty was so feeble? or was it worn as a mantle, to impose upon others, and keep them at a distance, that so none might guess at her feelings? He shuddered, as the suspicion arose that Ellen might be a hypocrite: he felt that it was shaking his last belief in excellence. Yet, if she did not like Lord Avondale, it left her nearly as unlike what he had thought her, that she should have married him. Lord Avondale was a more brilliant match than he would be, even after the death of Sir Francis: and had such paltry motives swayed her in the rejection of one lover, and the acceptance of another?

He arose from meditations like these with a contracted heart and a bitter spirit. He perceived with indignation, that, little as he had thought of Ellen of late, she had lost hardly any of her influence over him. He had no patience with the charm she still had for him, nor with the pang he felt at seeing her possibly prefer and certainly belong to another. In order at once to annihilate her power, he strove

to place her conduct in the worst possible light. He laboured to smother the dying embers of his regard, by cultivating the distrust he began to feel of her principles and her truth. It had been an unconscious regret to him hitherto, that he could make her bear no portion of the impatience with which disappointment inspires us. He had found fault only with himself for obstinately seeking out one who avoided him, and had exculpated her. He did so no longer. He saw so much to condemn in her marriage, that he readily admitted the belief, that with respect to him also, she must have been to blame. He thought of the eminence on which he had placed her, and smiled in scorn and disgust to see her fallen below Augusta.

These were all unuttered thoughts. His mother knew nothing of his attachment to Ellen, and cared little for her marriage to Lord Avondale. The hand of friendship might have probed his mental wounds, and healed his diseased and doubting spirit; but he had no such friend, and his disposition suffered for it. He grew keen and sarcastic, veiling his bitterness, as every man of polished manners knows how, from actually offending others, but not without

chilling their hearts. If he did not inspire enthusiasm or tenderness, he was always sure of admiration and applause, and that his mother on no account suffered him to neglect, as the long expected dissolution of Parliament at last took place.

On his first arrival in England, he had despatched the Biscayan to Santa Maria, with money, presents, and letters. He was now returned, full of delight at having seen his favourite protectress raised to the dignity of Abbess, and infinitely struck with the beauty of Cornelia, who had frequently conversed with him, though more by signs than words, as they were both but indifferent speakers of English, and she understood quite as little of Spanish as he did of Italian. Hubert wondered that Cornelia had not written to him, as he had delighted in teaching her, and Italian being familiar to the Abbess, he did not imagine there could be any objection to her writing in that language. She had sent him only a lock of her shining black hair, drawn through a ring, as the symbol of eternity. The tears she had shed upon it had dried long before he could receive it, and so he flattered himself must those have done that stained her cheek. He rejoiced to hear that

she looked rosy and healthy ; and having asked many questions of his messenger, he turned again to the laconic answer of Isabella. Having acknowledged the receipt of the several articles brought by the Biscayan, she proceeded :—

“ My beautiful charge is docile and intelligent. She learns all I wish her with avidity, but without pleasure. In the world one passion is expelled by another ; in the cloister we have only devotion in lieu of every passion ; it would itself become one in a mind like Cornelia’s, and I have no wish to see one madness take place of another. She was born with a temper that wanted every thing to moderate it ; you have given her fresh excitements, and added fuel to fire. I try to hope I may undo your work ; but yours were the more congenial lessons, though mine are enforced by time and affliction.”

“ Poor Cornelia !” thought Hubert, as he folded up this chilling letter ; “ how misplaced are you among cold and formal nuns ! They will make a crime of every gentle, tender feeling they have themselves outlived. They will

condemn where they do not understand, and wonder where they ought to feel." Yet, upon the whole, he knew Isabella would be kind to her; and if she felt uncomfortable, she might write, for the Abbess had no wish to detain her. Satisfying himself that she was comfortable or would have complained, he dismissed the thoughts for the present, and set about electioneering with as much spirit as his mother could wish.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL and Mrs. Parry expressed themselves warmly in his favour. Their son was just of the age to rejoice in being very busy, and thinking himself of prodigious use. Jane thought of nothing but making up bows of his colours and distributing them, and the very youngest of the children would on no account have been seen without them. All this Hubert might have cared for in former days, but the time had gone by ; Jane had grown up a nice-looking, fair girl, without her sister's pretension to beauty, but with a manner happily exempt from the flightiness of Augusta, and the coldness of Ellen. De Lisle looked at her, and could almost have said aloud, " 'Though the surface be less dazzling, the interior doubtless is the same."

Her eagerness in his cause did not flatter him ;

she was young, and imitated those around her ; she had good spirits, and a little therefore animated and occupied her. He was never more mistaken, for Jane did not think it necessary to do like other people, and could have been as much taken up with the other candidate, whom she knew and liked very well. But in truth she thought nothing ever was or could be so perfect as young De Lisle, and marvelled any one should be found to wish against him. This enthusiasm had nothing to do with love. In the first place, he was the handsomest man she knew, which goes a great way in early youth, when we have an unconscious association between beauty and excellence ; next, he was the most accomplished man of her acquaintance, the second man she had ever heard sing ! In her childhood he paid her great attention, which few others thought necessary. She was grateful for it, and very ready to return the compliment, now she was grown up. Jane was saved any danger that there might have been from meeting by chance in society with such a young man as De Lisle ; because, so far from seeing him for the first time, she scarcely remembered when first she had seen him. Always accustomed to admire him, and look up to him, she almost fancied him

old, because, when she herself had been a child, he was a man. Then she knew he was clever; and his princely manner, as she had often heard Augusta call it, conspired to place him above her. She thought it a great condescension if he shook hands with her, and never expected to engross his conversation; indeed, would have been quite as much alarmed as flattered, if such a thing had occurred.

Mrs. Parry took her daughter at this time to some races in the neighbourhood: very bad ones, but delightful to Jane, for they were the first she had seen. They called in their way on a Mrs. Wilson, who was to join their party, an arrangement no one quite liked; but Mrs. Wilson had made the request, and Mrs. Parry thought it would be too rude to refuse her. This lady was the daughter of a poor Scotch baron, and the widow of a rich manufacturer; and though from the latter circumstance she derived all her comfort, she looked upon it as a misfortune to be kept as much in the background as possible. She was not deficient either in talents or virtue, but being unhappily one of those pests of society, a privileged person,—one who has (no one knows how) established a right of saying disagreeable things,—she got little

credit for her really good qualities. When De Lisle came forward last time for the county, she had meant to give him her interest, and she had a good deal; but a Scotchman, who had lately purchased an estate in the neighbourhood, started as his opponent, and of course contrived to prove his relationship to Mrs. Wilson (he would have done half the county the same favour); but unfortunately their genealogical tree did not go as far back as his, and they were obstinately incredulous respecting any thing more remote than they had been accustomed to think of.

Colonel Fergusson was neither young nor handsome, but he was a shrewd person, with an eye to his own interest, and had been accounted lucky, because he made the best of every thing, and never ruined his own game by precipitancy. Jane Parry could not bear Mrs. Wilson at any time; now as the friend and relation of the Fergussons, there was no one she would not rather have gone with: but as she could not prevent it, she wisely determined to think as little of it as possible.

Unhappily, they had hardly driven on the ground before they passed the gay barouche of the Fergussons; and while looking about for a good situation, from whence to view the

race, Colonel Fergusson's smart livery-servant came up to Mrs. Wilson, with his master's compliments, and he had kept the best place for her and her party, between two of his carriages. Jane would rather never have seen a race, so shocking did it seem to her to appear in public just at that moment with the Fergussons. It was like treachery to De Lisle, and deserting his cause. Mrs. Parry did not partake in her distress, well aware that all the civil things she might be called upon to say to the sitting member would not make her husband's votes for Hubert less efficient.

As they drove up, they found De Lisle himself leaning against the open door of the barouche, talking to Mrs. Fergusson, who was a dashing lady, and piqued herself on her magnanimous regard for Hubert, and indifference to the event of the contest. In the latter sentiment she was less sincere than in the former ; and she had that morning had accounts of the success of the canvassing letter, in which De Lisle announced his intention of standing, which made her feel more insecure than she had thought could have been possible. The smiles with which she received him, were nearly as artificial as her complexion ; and she was un-

commonly anxious to be surrounded by the first people in the country, that the prevalent idea might be their all intending to support her husband. Jane Parry felt like a culprit as she returned Hubert's bow, and saw, by a slight elevation of his eyebrows, that he wondered to see them of the Fergusson's party. He came to say a word to Mrs. Parry, and, perceiving the carriage full, told Jane, if she was crowded, his mother had room for her, being quite alone.

Jane caught eagerly at the proposal, and, starting up, had already given her hand to Hubert to help her out of the carriage, when Mrs. Fergusson, willing that none of the family should appear with Lady De Lisle, interfered, declaring she could not suffer Miss Parry to go from the best place on the ground ; but that if she had not quite room enough, she should be happy of her company with her. This was worse and worse ; but Jane was already out of her mother's carriage, and could not well get in again, as it had not grown more spacious. So thought De Lisle, who turned to take her to Mrs. Fergusson. But Jane was seldom taken by surprise ; she went up to the lady, said something civil, but would on no account incommode her : she had wished to speak to Lady De

Lisle, but another time would do as well, and she was quite comfortable with her mother.

Mrs. Fergusson, knowing the young lady's pertinacity, did not persist ; but, curious to know if she really had any thing to say to Lady De Lisle, suggested sending a message. To this Jane agreed, and, tearing off a piece of paper from a letter in her pocket, wrote with a pencil, " I want to come to you, my dear Lady De Lisle, if you can contrive to get me—you will know my *particular* reason, when I tell you we are hemmed in by the other side." She was proceeding to fold her scrap up in a curious manner, but Hubert, who was weary of his situation, was glad of the excuse of conveying it, and she accordingly delivered it open. He looked at it, and saw a sort of finessing in the whole he could hardly pardon, though exerted in his favour. He knew, however, it would suit his mother, who accordingly praised Jane's quickness and zeal. Before the least advantage could be taken of either, the first heat was run, and before the acclamations at its conclusion had subsided, young Parry came galloping up, and mounted Lady De Lisle's coach-box. She wished in vain to apprise Jane of this; her carriage could not be extricated till some others

moved away, and she was obliged to content herself with waving her handkerchief to her at a distance. Jane was now obliged to think only of the horses and their owners, and this was ample amusement ; but as the time was unusually long between the second heat and the third, the party adjourned to a booth, and sat down to some cold meat the Fergussons had brought.

There was a young man with them, who was curious to know what chance De Lisle stood against his friend. Of course, in the set he was in, he heard he had none, which astonished and vexed Jane, though she tried to think there might be a little exaggeration in the statements. The next question was, what sort of young man he was thought, and what his abilities might be, that they could stand in lieu of experience ? Mrs. Wilson laughingly replied :

The first question would take too long answering, for no two people think alike of Mr. De Lisle. I suppose he is clever, though I never saw him betray any proof of it ; but I conclude so from the fact of his being liked in proportion as he pays attention to the individual who thinks he likes him, and *vice versa*. No one ever yet gave me a good reason why he

did or did not care about him, and I imagine, therefore, there is no good reason to give."

"It is evident," rejoined the stranger, "he is no favourite of yours."

"No! I am not young enough, or pretty enough, to secure his regard, and I cannot give mine for nothing."

"Oh! sits the wind in that quarter? quite a gallant gay! he does not look that sort of thing."

"His demureness makes his profligacy more dangerous."

Jane actually started on her seat, and looked crimson with anger. Her temper was still farther tried by Mrs. Fergusson, with an affectation of candour, beginning to excuse him. She had heard something of a sad scrape long ago, that nearly ended in a marriage; but he was so young then, it should be overlooked; and no one had very good authority for the report of the low amour that had detained him lately in Italy.

"For my part," said Mrs. Wilson, "I don't go abroad to form my opinion. I know only what I hear and see. You all know how he talks of our former neighbour, Miss Seymour, who took the veil somewhere;—a sentimental

affection for a nun may be mighty interesting, but it is not a thing I have much faith in. Besides," she added, purposely lowering her voice to escape Mrs. Parry's notice, "I have not forgot his unprincipled flirtation with Mrs. Seymour, nor his sober attachment to Lady Avondale."

Jane, whose quick ear had not lost a word of this speech, was so much hurt and overcome by it, that she made a sign to her mother to move; and finding it not attended to, she looked round in despair for her brother to take her from a place where the nervous dread of fainting had seized her. She looked in vain, and giving herself up to her fate, she concealed her face with her handkerchief, and burst into tears. The terror of exciting observation increased them to an hysterical degree; and Jane was presently surrounded by a group of persons offering cold water, and salts, and aromatic vinegar, and recommending things that nobody had to offer. Her mother's real alarm quieted her at once; ashamed of having been so childish, she resolutely wiped off her tears, and checked her sobs, and even got up to leave the tent, though much indebted for effecting it to Colonel Fergusson's ready arm, as she trembled so much

as scarcely to be able to stand. Before she got home she was as well as ever, except that she had acquired no small accession of dislike to Mrs. Wilson; and Mrs. Parry, who had herself been much fatigued by sitting so long, and knew Jane had gone out with a head-ache, looked no farther for the cause of her indisposition.

It could not be expected that she should escape so well among her acquaintance, and the report soon reached the De Lisles that Hubert had been abused so much in the Fergusson's booth, that it had made Jane Parry cry. Lady De Lisle was flattered by the interest felt for her son, but he was somewhat ungratefully more provoked with the folly of the thing. "What could it matter to her?" thought he, and how much easier and more useful it would have been to have defended him, than to have wept about it! Augusta would have retorted, quizzingly; Ellen would have silenced impertinence by a look; what ailed their sister that she could only make herself ridiculous? and he winced as if he thought he might by possibility share in the absurdity of which she had been guilty.

Rather curious to know what had been said, he called on Mrs. Parry, and asked Jane if the race had answered her expectations. Jane let her netting-needle fall, and stooped to pick it up till the colour she felt rising in her cheek had subsided. She then answered quietly, that it was a gay, pretty scene, and that she had no fault to find with it, but its being too long.

"My daughter," said Mrs. Parry, "went there not very well, and was so weary as to come home worse; but another time we will not take another person, and then we may come away when we are tired."

"Apropos of another person; they tell me Mrs. Wilson is my bitter foe. Do you know, Jane, if it is so?"

To this unexpected question Miss Parry knew not what answer to make, and looked at her mother, who replied for her, "I don't think Mrs. Wilson a bitter foe to any one. She is a good woman, and would be pleasanter if she could hold her tongue sometimes."

"Then she really does not abuse me more than I deserve? In that case, I suppose, I must bear it patiently!"

Jane gathered courage to say, "There can be no difficulty in bearing Mrs. Wilson's censure, since so many shared it with you."

"My dear!" said Mrs. Parry in astonishment, "what makes you so severe? I don't remember any thing she ever said that need affront us?"

"Perhaps I am sooner affronted than you; and, besides, you always forget ill-natured things as soon as they are said."

"Yes; it is the next best thing to their not being said at all."

"I am a little curious," said Hubert, "to know what these ill-natured things were."

"I did not hear them," said Mrs. Parry, "and if Jane did, she will not take upon herself their responsibility by repeating them."

De Lisle saw, thus warned, Jane would be mute, and made no farther attempt to get his picture from Mrs. Wilson; indeed, but for Jane's tears, the whole would have been instantly consigned to oblivion; but the lady's sensibility and preference for him was too good a story to sleep, and he heard of it during the whole time the election lasted.

During all these transactions, there were scarcely any persons who presented themselves

so seldom to De Lisle's mind, as the unfortunate boarder of Santa Maria. It was not so with her. Every feeling was saddened or cheered by thoughts of him: every step in knowledge was full of him. The Abbess had hoped that constant occupation would deaden the past; but every thing she did or learned, referred itself to the idol of her fancy and the despotic sovereign of her affections. Ignorance to her had been bliss; for the more she learned of the conduct and principles of others, the more she condemned her own, the more she feared that her glowing tenderness and truth had met with the mere semblance of regard.

A young nun, who had not taken the veil many months, was her favourite companion. She was a cheerful, feeling person, and much better informed than any others of the community, excepting the Abbess.

She wished Cornelia to take the veil and remain with them; and often asked her what her objection could be, since she had lost her home, and was alone in the world?

"Did *you* leave it, then, with so little reluctance?" asked the Italian. "All eternal engagements are solemn things," replied the nun, "and I do not deny that I have often, during the year

of my noviciate, asked myself if I should never regret the vow I meditated. But the world had little attraction for me, and I thought a quiet and blameless life might be acceptable to God."

"Then you loved no one in the world, or you could not have thought it quite without attraction?"

"Pardon me, I did love some things, and it was a pang to part from them. But living in the world does not secure to us the early objects of our affection; the tide of life takes them backwards and forwards, and is for ever dividing us from what is dear to us; and last of all comes the great separator, Death. I only did for myself what a few years would have done for me. I trembled on the brink; but I have passed it, and would not go back."

"In what way have you found rest? by forgetting the past, or leaping at once this monotonous dream you call existence, to dwell in the future?"

"I do not forget the past; I am content with the present, and hope to rejoice in the future. Do not fancy me driven to take refuge from worldly sorrow in the arms of Religion. I doubt not her power of consoling, but the spring of enjoyment is unbroken within me, and I could

have been happy in the world, as I mean to be here."

"Why, then, quit it while it held out any hope to you?"

"I will tell you. While my mother lived, who was passionately fond of me, I led rather a gay life;—but she was taken from me. My father was an excellent match, for he had only me. His widowhood had hardly expired, before numbers solicited the honour of his alliance, offering their sisters or their daughters for his choice. He had loved my mother, and lamented her, as in the world the dead are lamented. In short, he brought home a young wife, who soon presented him with an heir. I loved my little brother, but I could not love my step-mother. After considering for some time how much it would delight every one if I took the veil, (for my father had transferred much of the affection that had once been mine to the new claims on it,) and reflecting how little I should sacrifice in escaping the control of a malicious and jealous person, I announced my intention. I was not blinded about it in any way; and my father even recommended my marrying, as at that time I might have done rather advantageously. I might have been tempted,

had I thought my suitor cared for me, but I knew that our indifference was mutual, that it would be a family arrangement, and that the family would substitute any other name as ancient as mine, without thinking they had changed. Of two such important engagements, I chose the one that affected only myself; and rejoice that I have not made myself responsible for the happiness of one whose happiness I could not have constituted."

"Envious, passionless being!" exclaimed Cornelia; "a gloomy dungeon would be no punishment to you, lighted by your own pure disinterested thoughts."

The nun smiled at her enthusiasm—she placed her hand on a lowly grave-stone, as she answered, "Look at what should calm the impetuous and console the unfortunate!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the Italian, "if I could hope to be there!"

Her companion turned round, and viewed with pain the wildness of her countenance.

"Cornelia," she said earnestly, "we will pray that at the time appointed we may both die in the faith." Touched by her manner, Cornelia embraced her, and promised to take her for her guide; but fresh letters from England for

a time occupied her, to the exclusion of her new friendship. She answered them not, and Hubert, wounded at her neglect, half determined to write no more. He relented, as an opportunity he had not expected presented itself, and he was unconscious that his letter was colder than the preceding ones. It was necessarily shorter, for he was busy at the moment; and not long after, he embarked in the contest that ingrossed all his time. It was a long and vehement struggle, but it was crowned with success, and Hubert prized it in proportion to the trouble it had given him.

He gave a dinner at the largest inn in the neighbouring town, and really felt animated. Called upon to express gratitude for the exertions of his friends, and confidence in their kind feelings, he was carried away by the stimulus of the moment, and more than half believed what he said. He talked of his political sentiments till the theme roused him, like the young war-horse who smells the distant battle. He returned home late, or rather early, full of those artificial spirits, the situation he was placed in, and the wine he had swallowed, conspired to excite. His servant, as he lighted his candles, gave him a foreign letter;—he threw it from him, for,

in high good-humour with himself, he wished not to be chilled by a few reproofing lines from Isabella. He had shoved it so violently, that it fell over the table; and as the servant picked it up, Hubert perceived it had a black seal. He tore it open impatiently, and his eye first caught the large characters of the inclosure, written by the Abbess.—

“Cornelia is no more. She was this day hurried to her silent dwelling, for the livid spots on her breast might have spread, and given rise to conjectures it was my desire to avoid. De Lisle! the impassioned spirit that loved you above its Creator, is in an unknown world—there is no longer a trace of it on the earth:—let her be a warning for the future. It is the sister of Lionel Seymour who implores you to take heed of your ways. These things are spoken lightly of in the world, but remember *that* can be no venial trespass which offends the purity of God, and breaks the heart of one of his creatures.”

Hubert looked long and carefully at these few lines, in the hope that, by dint of examination, some soothing detail, some consolatory feel-

ing might be found in them. The letter inclosed, he doubted not, was from Cornelia, but he feared to open it. It was the voice of Death, from which he shrank with superstitious awe. As increasing light broke through the stillness of early day, he summoned resolution to know at once all that could be known. In the last painful hours of life, thus had Cornelia written :—

“ A long, a last adieu to my beloved ! They tell me, we feel not in other worlds as we have done in this—that when the spirit is disincumbered from this clumsy dwelling-house, we love without pain or anxiety. It is a blessed creed, and I will hope in it. For you, sole thought of the heart-broken Cornelia ! mourn not for me. They say, that in your country, those who have nothing left to hope here, will often turn voluntarily to the dread hereafter—you will not, then, think it unpardonable that I lay down the burden of life, which is become too heavy for me to bear. Your last letter was all I waited for : it is on my heart, and chills the place it touches, though fever rages around it. I do not reproach you, that you could not love me ; but had you told me so before, I had not purchased shame and

welcomed death. Had you been severely merciful, I could have turned in innocence to my Almighty Father, and clung to him when no human heart was open to me. Alas! I saw in you the reflection of my own ardent feelings, and I mistook the shadow for something real. It has grown paler and paler, and now is vanished: its last feeble outline was dear to me: it was my all. This is the first and last letter I write to you. Pardon these tears. I did not think, when you taught me to form these characters, I should so employ my knowledge. Knowledge! it is indeed a bitter tree. I longed to gather its fruit, and what have I learned? That I am a wretch whose sin man will never pardon: the world has branded me with infamy. I will try to hope God will be more merciful; but I will not mock his holy altar by pronouncing there vows which my heart disclaims. I cannot cast the mantle of hypocrisy over my guilt, neither can I again appear in the world under a false character, and usurp esteem from the good. I could better bear insult from the wicked. I am a burden on your generosity here. I could receive your alms, but then it is too like the wages of sin to be accepted gratefully. One little redeeming word of tenderness, and I would have struggled

with my bitter lot a little longer. Yet I am thankful you have not deceived me. The tortures of suspense are at an end. Your heart I never possessed, your esteem I have forfeited. Surely, if you were here, you could not ask me to live? But you are very, very distant, and the gravestone will long have rested on my weary breast, ere you know that the being who idolized you, and lost herself for you, can never again say how dearly she had loved you. May you be happy with the dreams of ambition, if they can fill a mind like your's,—with the applause of the world, if it can reach your heart! And when you marry, Hubert, choose one who knows better the distinctions between virtue and vice than did your poor peasant girl; but ask fearlessly of the Almighty that she may have a heart as full of you as

“YOUR OWN CORNELIA.”

Hubert read over this letter but once. He locked it up with the braid of hair she had sent him, and a picture he had made her sit for at Genoa: he placed a seal upon the lock, and buried the remembrance of these things in the inmost recesses of his heart. The time for self-delusion was past: he could no longer gloss

over a tale, in which were despair and death. His dormant conscience had been soothed by much specious reasoning, but it was awake at last, and claimed its own. He saw himself a seducer and a murderer. He scorned himself, as he had formerly scorned others. He reprobated alike his want of principle and generosity at the first, his want of justice and integrity at the last. He wrote a few, a very few lines, to the Abbess, and even the cold and blameless Isabella wept over the anguish they contained.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISTRUST.

THERE are mental as well as bodily wounds, that skin over the sooner for being in their nature incurable. So it was with Hubert. He was altered, but the change appeared not on the surface. For a few days he was paler and more absent than usual, but this every one naturally attributed to fatigue. He did all his mother suggested as civil and attentive, before he left the country. The last people that dined at his house were the Parrys; and become gentler to others on growing less tolerant to himself, he no longer sought for artifice or manœuvring in their young and pleasing daughter.

“We have brought letters from Ellen and Augusta,” said the old General, “that our new member may see he is not forgotten by his absent friends.”

They were produced, and Hubert smiled, as he glanced over the one from Mrs. Seymour to her mother, at its general tone of gaiety, and the characteristically playful manner in which she sent her congratulations to him. As he returned it, he read some lines under the seal, written very small, and which he afterwards perceived must have escaped Mrs. Parry's notice. They were these. "I hear from another quarter, (for you were too prudent to tell me,) that my very young sister was goose enough to weep *en pleine assemblée* at hearing Mr. De Lisle called a profligate! Bless the silly girl, does she take men for saints?"

Hubert of course took not the smallest notice of this postscript, but he was but little flattered to perceive how readily Augusta would believe any tale she might hear to his disadvantage, and sorry to find she saw no necessity for esteeming her friends. He forgot that she was but doing as he did, with somewhat more levity; and he could perceive in others how little amiable was the want of generous unsuspicious reliance on the virtue of those with whom we live. Lady Avondale's letter to her father was in a very different strain. It was a more gratifying one to the receiver, for it showed more heart, more in-

terest in petty details, but it was by no means so amusing to an indifferent person. Of the election she said :—

“ I *do* rejoice in Hubert’s success for his own sake, for he wants an occupation ; for the sake of his mother, who will glory in the display of his talents ; and for your sake, my dear father, who will read every word your young favourite utters, and think yourself interested in every question he advocates.”

When De Lisle had returned the letters, he went up to a bay-window, where Jane was standing, and said for something to say, “ It was a gay time for you when both your sisters married !”

“ Gay !” she repeated, in an accent of doubt, as if she could not have heard him correctly.

“ Gay to lose both my sisters at once ?”

“ They were almost too old to be much of companions to you.”

“ You think my father and mother are of a more congenial age ?”

Hubert smiled. “ *You* think I am talking nonsense, and perhaps you are right ; but marriages are reckoned gay things, and when the

first pain of separation is over, it must be comfortable to see those for whom we are interested happily settled."

"I am sorry that I cannot agree to either of those statements. The pain of separation cannot abate, as long as I feel, every hour in the day, the want of Augusta to amuse, and Ellen to instruct me;—nor," she added, cautiously lowering her voice, "can I find consolation in the thought of their happiness, for I am more than doubtful of its existence."

"Mrs. Seymour writes like a very happy person."

"Like a very merry one. I agree, it would not be Augusta, if she could not laugh, both at what diverts and what provokes her. I may be wrong; but I think it will prove a turbulent *ménage*. Captain Seymour has many good points, but he is impetuous, accustomed to overcome all obstacles, and be undisputed master of all that approaches him. They may be as happy as most couples, and yet leave me much to wish for my sister."

"That is just why I wonder that any one ever does marry, or ever wishes their friends to do so."

It was Jane's turn to smile. "Don't accuse

me of leading you into any such exaggerations. I know there are excellent women in the world ; and I am ready to believe there are also excellent men. I do not therefore see why, if they happen to meet, they may not be very happy."

" Nor I ; but they do *not* meet."

" Do not speak so positively in the very teeth of evidence. Look at Mrs. Mansel standing by poor Miss James at the piano-forte, because she knows no one else would be benevolent enough to listen to her : do you not see happiness in every line of her countenance, and affection for her husband in every chance-look she gives him ?"

" I believe she is an amiable happy woman ; but I did not know that her happiness was purely domestic : I mean, that it depended solely on her husband."

" Then you do not know Mrs. Mansel, or you would see, that she stands in need of no other ingredient for happiness than the attachment of such a man."

" You look so animated, my dear Miss Parry," said Mrs. Mansel, crossing the room, and joining them, " that I think you must be defending some absent friend."

"You are near the truth," said Jane, laughing, "for I was defending matrimony."

"And recommending it to Mr. De Lisle?"

"Most vigorously; indeed, with perseverance worthy of a better cause."

"Say rather, of better success."

"I will say what you will; but our united forces will not move him."

"Have you any one good reason to give why I should marry?" asked De Lisle.

"So far from it, that I cannot see what should tempt you. If you did not do it long ago, I suppose you did not wish it; and if you are comfortable as you are, it would be very unwise to try what might make you otherwise."

"Comfortable as I am!" thought De Lisle; but he only answered with a smile, "I perceive you look upon me as a confirmed old bachelor."

Parliament met at last, and De Lisle entered on his new career with vigour. He was not eager to speak on the first question that presented itself, for he wanted nothing, and cared not to whom he recommended himself; but as soon as he thought the thing of consequence, he gave his opinion like one who had not hastily

and rashly adopted it. The attention with which he was listened to, had nothing in it of the indulgence granted to a maiden speech ; it was very genuine admiration, and some surprise, among those who knew not before of the speaker's existence. It was evident that a star of no trifling magnitude had risen among them, and it became a matter of some anxiety to ascertain which way he would go. For a time he was much courted by all parties, and he looked complacently around him, and enjoyed the high ground on which he stood.

He came home to be almost worshipped by his mother, whose ambition was fully gratified, and to receive from his constituents the most ardent demonstrations of approbation. With a little of this he was flattered, with much he became fatigued ; and the evident insincerity of some of the compliments paid him, would occasionally bring a smile of contempt on lips that tried to wear one of courteousness. The day after his return to the Park, he rode over to General Parry's, and found his old friends delighted at the birth of a grandchild. Mrs. Parry had gone to Mrs. Seymour's, which was only in the adjoining county ; and Lady Avondale had come to stay with her father.

Hubert did not hear without some emotion that Ellen was actually in the house. It was not pleasure; nor was it quite pain; yet he wished it over. Lady Avondale seemed to have the same idea, for she entered evidently prepared to meet him. She was so different from the Ellen he had parted from not quite three years before, that he had scarce the self-possession to reply properly to her greeting. She had grown fatter; she was much dressed; she wore gay ribbons and rouge. She looked brilliantly handsome, and there was a degree of showiness and glare in her manner and countenance, as well as in her beauty and attire. She talked, too, a great deal, and what she said was clever and amusing, but her liveliness had no mirth in it, and her smile no cheerfulness. That serenity and holy calm on her features, which he had admired so much, and thought no one could long gaze on without feeling every passion hushed to repose, had given place to a restlessness that betrayed a perpetual mental struggle. He wondered why she chose to wrap around her misery this glittering mantle, that to his fancy became her so ill. That she was an unhappy wife he believed, but he would have thought her the very person of all others

to have given dignity to every sort of suffering, by her manner of bearing it.

The more oppressed he became by yielding to these thoughts, the more she tried to carry it off by talking and laughing upon every sort of subject. Hubert nearly accused her of heartlessness, but in this nervous anxiety to prevent a pause in conversation, he thought at last he detected a greater interest for himself than she chose to avow, and a keener remembrance of the circumstances under which they had parted, than even he retained. His vanity was flattered, and his manner, that had been stately and cold, softened. In proportion as he exerted himself, her animation faded away, but she rallied a little on Lord Avondale's coming in.

No two people could feel less cordial towards one another than did De Lisle and the husband of Ellen; yet they met as friends, and affected all proper degree of interest in each other's concerns; nor could they be accused of much dissimulation in so doing, since they deceived no one, and least of all each other. When De Lisle got home, he was rejoiced to find that the Avondales were to make a very short stay in the country, and was provoked to hear Lady De Lisle had asked them to dinner, purposely

to meet him. It was meant to give him pleasure, and he could not, therefore, be ungracious enough to make his escape, as he would have liked.

"You found Lady Avondale," said his mother, "much improved in appearance? I am so glad her husband makes her dress, and talk, and show herself off to the best advantage."

"Habit and prejudice," said Hubert smiling, "goes a great way in one's taste. I was used to her quietness, and liked it."

"But did you like her thinness too? If not, you must think her handsomer than she was."

"I liked her as she was, I believe."

"Defects and all! Why any one but myself would suspect you of having been in love with her after such a speech! Don't say such things to Lord Avondale; for though he is never satisfied if she is not admired, he is furiously jealous."

"A pleasant life she must have of it!"

"Oh, I believe she don't mind much. He would make a better husband, I think, if she humoured him less; but your super-excellent women always make work for themselves. They insist upon being so much too much in the right, that they provoke their husbands with their

very goodness. I remember an old woman saying to a very docile sister of mine, whose extreme gentleness had taught her husband waywardness, that if she wanted to be perfectly miserable, she had only to tell him she was doing her duty, when the awkward recollection that there might be such things as reciprocal duties, and the consciousness that he had left them all to her, would put him irretrievably out of humour."

"Good people may be injudicious, certainly ; but I used to think Lady Avondale a person of superior judgment."

"So did I ; and all I say now is, that she does not show it in the management of her husband. If she could be put out of temper, he might think the change unpleasant, and not produce it again. It is a melancholy fact, that our defects have more power over our friends than our virtues."

Sir Francis still continued enough himself to do the honours in his own house, though he did not leave it ; and as Ellen was a great favourite, he was much pleased to see her. She sat next him at dinner, talked hardly to any one else, and her attention and sweet manner evidently revived the old man. Hubert thought that, had

Ellen been his wife, his father at least would have been a gainer. There was an icy thought, too, came flitting through his memory—he would not, in that case, have met with Cornelia; or, if he had, Ellen would have been there to guard her, both against him and herself. The half-formed idea did but shoot through his troubled brain, and then subside; like the iron belt of penance, worn in ages past, which, in the hour of festive mirth, would sometimes give a sudden pain, and (though still closely clinging to the wearer) be again as suddenly forgotten. The momentary mist broke away and dispersed, as he turned to answer a sprightly remark of his neighbour's; but the cloud that had gathered on Lord Avondale's brow was more stationary; and he ever and anon cast such impatient glances at his wife, that even De Lisle, following the direction of Miss Parry's eye, wondered if he could be jealous of his father.

When the ladies withdrew, other topics were started; and he forgot to take any farther notice of his ruffled guest; but in the evening, as he was playing at chess with Jane, and her sister was tuning her harp, his quick ear caught a taunting speech addressed to her by her hus-

band. The insinuation that Ellen devoted herself to Sir Francis for his son's sake, was unrepelled by her. Hubert would not look round to see if she was calm as well as silent, but he unconsciously looked at Jane, and her burning cheek and anxious look betrayed her dread of his having heard Lord Avondale's words as well as she did herself. To relieve her from this fear, he began telling her the first story that came into his head; and his open unembarrassed manner appeared to give her considerable comfort.

In the mean while Lady Avondale played and sang, and was admired and thanked, and sat smiling over her graceful instrument, as if the harmony her fingers had produced, had power to reach her heart. Hubert hoped it was so; and standing apart, and at a distance, he gazed upon her with that melancholy tenderness which may be supposed to arise in the breast of a prophet who sees death and desolation striding onwards to blast a glorious land.

"If you are not going to play at chess any more," said his mother, "you had better go and sing with Lady Avondale."

"I would not put her so much out," he answered quietly. She heard him, and turning

round with one of her most sunny smiles, told him he must sing one of the duets she had so often heard Mrs. Seymour join him in.

If she chose to brave her husband's ire, it was no concern of De Lisle's; so he came forward and took the part assigned him. Lord Avondale hovered near them with a scowling brow, but Ellen seemed unconscious of his vicinity. Her self-possession and presence of mind did not once desert her: she neither said nor looked any thing that could be called grief or bitterness. The attention she paid Hubert was nothing conspicuous; it was neither positively affectionate, nor in the least constrained. He would have liked a little less, or a little more—that is, it would have been gratifying to his vanity and self-love; for all attachment to her he believed to be over, and he had no inclination to revive it, now she was the wife of another. Their parting might have been called imperceptible, for she was actually gone before he recollected he might not see her again for years; and then he remembered how differently once before they had parted, and smiled in melancholy disdain at the vehemence of feelings that had vanished, not only from his heart, but almost from his memory.

CHAPTER XIV.

EVERY day De Lisle felt a warmer interest in his new occupation. It connected itself pleasantly with all his former studies ; it lent him an object in forming new acquaintance ; it gave him the sort of footing in society, so gratifying to the pride of talent. It had been irksome to him to be courted as the heir of a certain number of acres ; and he knew that many who now sought his intimacy, were affected by that circumstance, only as it might give him more weight, and add to the strength of whatever party he joined—for money is power. Every session saw him more assiduous, more earnest, and more ingrossed by the study of politics. It added keenness to his intellect, method to his reflections, depth and firmness to his character, but no benevolence to his temper, no religion to his heart. Politics develope

so much corruption, unveil such selfish intentions, betray such sordid views—the most amiable professors of the science are so apt to be insincere—that it requires no small share of generous simplicity to enable any one to trust them.

It was a school in which De Lisle distinguished himself; but as he rather fixed than weakened the faults in his disposition, he was no nearer being happy than he had been at a time when he was less known. The pursuit, however, took great hold of him, and he daily abstracted himself more and more from the ordinary occupations of his time of life. He withdrew himself from all society that was not political or literary, and when circumstances forced him to places of more general resort or public amusement, he considered it as a sacrifice to be got over as rapidly as possible.

In the gay world he sometimes met Lady Linden and Mrs. Seymour, the former with wonder, the latter with regret. Lord Linden he never beheld, but he understood that he gave good dinners, had rather a pleasant house, and was reckoned an amiable, indulgent husband. He thought how much he must be altered, but certainly not more so than his wife, who was no

longer either sick or languid. She looked delicate and quiet, but appeared to interest herself in what surrounded her quite as much as was rational and proper. She was as popular and as fashionable as a woman can be, with whom fine places and fine people are but secondary considerations. Her husband, her children, nay, even the comfort of her country-house, were all known to claim the precedence; and the world, after all, is very equitable, and will never make an idol of one who will make no sacrifices to it. Lady Linden was very well liked, and many a prudent mother delighted to get so pleasing and irreproachable a person to *chaperon* her daughter; but she was to no one, man or woman, an object of enthusiasm or homage.

The first time De Lisle met her, he did not immediately recollect her. He had never seen her much dressed, or looking in health and spirits. He was not thinking of her; and, though there was a something he thought he had seen before, he was by no means certain enough to bow to her. She looked at him rather steadily for a moment, and turned away her head: he was convinced he did not know her. The crowd thickened, and impelled them both towards a doorway. She almost touched

him, and the low tremulous voice in which she said, "Mr. De Lisle, I believe?" instantly recalled her to his mind. She was too much associated with Lionel Seymour in his memory not to have some power to interest him. They said, however, but little, for she was evidently agitated, and he respected her emotion. Afterwards, when chance brought them together, she was more serene, and seemed willing to converse with him as with others, but not more so; and as he seldom made the first advances, their intimacy made no progress.

With Augusta Seymour he found himself on the same footing as ever. She was less freshly beautiful than before he went abroad, but she was more fascinating. Fashion had not spoiled the natural manner with which she had charmed so many; but, what was to be lamented, neither had experience taught her prudence or circumspection. The levity and love of admiration that in a wild girl in the country was easily pardoned, naturally became an object of censure, when conspicuous in the conduct and deportment of a married woman. Had she been united to a quiet person, her senior, who could have given her the continual protection of which she stood in need, all might have been well; but

Captain Seymour had spirits as high and uncontrolled as her own, and was both more wayward and more selfish. His heedlessness and uncertain temper perpetually exposed her to animadversion.

As her flightiness saved her from feeling very keenly the real discomfort of her situation, she cherished it as a useful quality, and finding home duller even than she had expected, and the world more attractive, she deserted the former, and sought for amusement and distinction where both awaited her. No one was so much the fashion, no one had so much influence in the set in which she lived, and no one was more heartily abused out of it. She delighted in her conspicuous situation, received all homage with equal pleasure, and fully persuaded herself, that while she cared for no one but her husband, she might flirt with any one else she happened to meet.

De Lisle marked her with regret, fluttering like a gay insect in the sun, surrounded by all the fine men about town, eulogised in the most open manner to her face, and cruelly aspersed by the same persons behind her back. He tried to reason her out of the infatuation that detracted so much from her respectability,

and would eventually do so from her happiness; and while the world classed him among her most successful admirers, he was approving himself a better friend to her peace, than her husband.

Augusta gaily replied to his remonstrances, and reaped no farther advantage from his frequent conversations, than the credit of ingrossing a man of brilliant talents, who paid attention to no one else. She was perfectly satisfied with the result, and he was provoked with the cold-hearted malice that could condemn so young and good-natured a person, upon no better grounds than a gay and careless manner. He lost much of his disapprobation at her callousness to censure, when he found that it was cast upon her in so little proportion to the offence. The injustice of others had the usual effect, of making him unjust the other way. He saw a person, who never willingly inflicted pain herself, attacked in the bitterest manner, misrepresented on all occasions, speeches given to her she had never uttered, or if she had, under such different circumstances that they ceased to have the same meaning:—he looked another way, and beheld the selfish, the malicious, and the doubtfully virtuous pass by,

without exciting sarcasm or virulence in any one. He attributed this want of equity to systematic wickedness, that oppressed those only who were too benevolent to be censorious in their turn. He accordingly condemned the fashionable world at once, and believed it to be, to the full, as base, treacherous, and corrupt as the political one.

The best years of his life were spent amid similar feelings and speculations, and they yielded him, therefore, little of the enjoyment supposed to be inherent in youth. Hitherto he had met in his public life with little to embarrass him. He had never hesitated about which line to take; he had determined to steer clear of party and prejudice, and do in truth, what every man in his canvass professes to do, honourably and conscientiously what he thought to be his duty. By such conduct, he might lose his chance of a place under any government; but independent in fortune as in mind, that was the last thing worthy his consideration, and he believed that he should acquire the weight and influence which ought to belong to talent and integrity.

He was long before he would see he had been mistaken. Not only the two leading par-

ties, but every fraction of a party, would have sacrificed much to gain him ; but as he never voted to please any one, but solely according to his own view of the matter, no one could rely on his support ; and as he was of use to no one, and supported no one, he was suffered to stand alone. He was surprised and mortified to find, without numbers nothing could be done. Even the local interests of his county suffered, for he could not influence a single vote, and he saw with regret, that his predecessor, Colonel Fergusson, who did not bring to the cause half the labour, energy, and ability, that he did, had in fact made a more useful county member. Then arose important and agitating questions, and Hubert felt himself left out. Each member turned to his patron or leader (for some had only patrons), and was forced into momentary consequence, by making common cause with those who had the ability or the popularity he could not by himself attain.

De Lisle weighed this long and seriously : he acknowledged that by belonging to no party, he was little better than a nonentity. The question then was, whom should he join ? He considered and reconsidered, and felt there were some things on which he would be at issue with

them all. To choose the one whose leading principles he thought best, was all he could do ; but from that hour he determined to withdraw from Parliament. He could not bear to feel himself pledged to any set of men, for he had no confidence in any one, as little in a party as in an individual. The first time that he absented himself from a debate in which he thought it possible he might be disposed to speak against his new friends, was a bitter and a painful moment. He had that strong feeling of degradation which the combined force of pride, sensibility, and fastidious delicacy, may be supposed to excite ; and he determined it should be the last, as it was the first trial of the sort, to which he would expose himself. He was loth to grieve his mother, but yet more unwilling to harass himself. He awaited the conclusion of a long and rather stormy parliament, and then broke his resolution to Lady De Lisle.

She took it more quietly than he had expected. She was glad he had made a figure, and revived the family interest ; but she had often suspected he would never marry while he had any thing else to do ; so she consoled herself now with the hope that being so entirely at

leisure, he could not fail to gratify her wishes in that respect. Colonel Fergusson brought forward his son; and Tom Parry, backed by Hubert's interest, opposed him. Both young men had some talent, but Parry was the most popular, and gained the day. He had served all through the Peninsular war, and understood more of military concerns than general politics; but De Lisle knew him to be upright, bold, and decided, and did not doubt his soon getting into the routine of business, and making in fact a more efficient member than ever he had done.

The young soldier, who had from his boyish days looked up to Hubert as the best and cleverest of men, now believing that he owed to him his success in this great object of his ambition, knew not how to express his gratitude, and seemed ready to devote the rest of his life to him, and eager to place himself solely under his guidance. But Hubert disliked managing others almost as much as he disliked being himself managed. He accordingly accompanied him to town, introduced him to some of his friends, told him all he thought would be useful for him to know, and then left him to his fate, and insisted on his thinking and acting for himself.

Very shortly after, an express summoned him from town to a Mrs. Ellersley's, a widowed sister of his mother, which announced the sudden death of his father. Sir Francis had long been helpless, ailing, and nearly imbecile, but his family were accustomed to his state, and were as much shocked and astonished at his demise, as if he had been called away in the vigour of health and strength. Hubert was stunned as well as affected. He roused himself to make arrangements for his mother's comfort, who chose in future to reside with her sister, and leave her son entirely his own master in the house that had now become his. His father's remains were to be conveyed to the family vault, to repose beside his ancestors ; and the new Baronet followed the mournful procession, not perhaps with any acute feeling of anguish, but with that deep dejection of spirit, which the death of an indulgent parent must excite in every breast not steeled against impressions of all kinds.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN the funeral was over, and the sort of awful bustle it excited had subsided, and, one by one, those who had business to transact with De Lisle on his succeeding his father, had dispersed and left him to himself, he looked around his silent and deserted halls, and felt that solitude is depressing. His mother had often asked to the Park persons whom he thought it most tiresome to receive; but such visits were short; and though provoked at the moment from being put out of his way, he had a sure refuge in his own room, and many a dark plantation none walked in but himself, to escape to when unusually unsocial. The whole was now his, and he could gaze out of every window in his house, wander through every walk in his extensive grounds, certain of being always alone. He acknowledged it was cheerless, but he had not spirits

to make it otherwise ; and the more habitually depressed he became, the more he shrank from casual observation.

Summer surprised him in this gloomy mood, but the excitement a walk or ride on a fine day produced, more than died away in the evening. Often, when he had dined, would he cast a glance through his long spacious library, and at the large dark grate at the end of it, and turn into the open air, till the twilight had become darkness, and the lighted lamps suspended from the ceiling, diffused some cheerfulness through the apartment. Still he regretted the fire, that had been his companion, and decided the place where he should sit, and had been the subject of many an indefinite contemplation. He was forced to prepare employments for different hours; and in doing so, the consciousness pressed upon him that he was not enjoying life, but struggling through it. The effort of to-day brought him nearer the effort of to-morrow, and a long succession of such exertions would be closed by the sleep of death.

He was taken out of meditations connected only with himself, by an event in his immediate neighbourhood—the death of the clergyman. The living was in his gift, and numerous were the applications he received for it. Some of

the claims to his attention were curious ; they were grounded on a doubtful relationship, or an imaginary intimacy ; and he turned in disgust from such pleas, to examine into the merits of other candidates. He pondered leisurely in his mind, for he had two reasons against committing himself rashly. The first originated in principle, and the next in feeling : he was desirous to find a good and active parish-priest, and he also wished to meet with an independent gentleman, since he must occasionally associate with him, if it was only to keep up the custom of the Sunday dinner. He knew the former was more common than the latter ; for he had not forgotten the impression he received of the lower order of the clergy he used to meet, in his early youth, at the table of a great uncle, who was a bishop.

Fully aware, that from his situation he was exposed to meet a sycophant in almost every inferior, he dreaded getting accustomed to the sort of thing, and becoming overbearing, or at least ridiculous. He hated servility in every profession, but a cringing teacher of the Gospel he knew he could never be civil to, or endure within his doors. For the first time since the death of his father, he rode over to General Parry's, and submitted to his old friends the

singular embarrassment under which he laboured. The benign old soldier laughed at his distress, and assured him there were many good and pleasant men in the church, who would be thankful for his living, and enliven his solitude. But to the question if he knew any such, the General could give no satisfactory reply. He was acquainted with one delightful person, but he was waiting for a college preferment, and would therefore only answer as a temporary assistant: he knew another clever man, who would gladly take it, but he had *such* a wife, and so large and graceless a family, that it would be saddling Sir Hubert with too much: finally, he knew of another, the youngest son of an old friend, whom he would gladly recommend, but that he feared he was a Methodist, and he would not willingly consent to be frightened out of the little life that remained to him.

De Lisle smiled, and turned to Mrs. Parry, who also mentioned various persons, but none seemed to come up to the preconceived notion of the patron. While she was speaking, he happened to glance his eye towards Jane, who was sitting at some distance, affecting to read a newspaper, but in fact watching the conversation with an earnest anxious expression

he never remembered to have seen before on her countenance. He saw at once that she could name some one if she chose, but he did not like to ask her, lest it might make her uncomfortable. He contented himself with begging Mrs. Parry would try and recollect some other person. She mused for a moment, then turning suddenly to her daughter said,—

“Do you know, Jane, what has become of that fine young man we met at Augusta’s?—Was not he to take orders?”

“I believe he has been a deacon some time,” she replied in a steady voice, but with a check so crimsoned that De Lisle wanted no farther clue to her feelings.

He cautiously looked from her as he made farther inquiries. He learned that Mr. Solway was popular and pleasing, and read well, but more Mrs. Parry could not tell. He was fond of Augusta’s children, and was thought to have some influence, and that a beneficial one, over her husband, so that Mrs. Seymour courted his society, though she confessed his gravity oppressed her. De Lisle thought this the best thing he had yet heard; for he could not quite have submitted to take a priest of Augusta’s choosing. When he arose to depart, he said he would first look in at their conservatory, and

asked Jane to accompany him. As soon as they were out of hearing he said,

"I am sure you can tell me more of this Mr. Solway than your mother has done; you have been so much oftener with your sister, and must have met him more frequently."

"I am no judge of the sort of person you want."

"Well, tell me what Mr. Solway is, and I will tell you if that will suit me."

"I am not worthy to praise such a man as Mr. Solway," said Jane with steady composure, "but seek him yourself, and you will not find your labour lost."

"If he is so charming, of course you would wish him to be your neighbour."

"We are not talking of my private feelings," she replied rather haughtily.

"Forgive me, my dear Jane; I would seek to penetrate only with a view to gratify them."

"In that case," she said, struggling with very evident confusion, "I will not conceal from you, that Mr. Solway's getting any living would be very agreeable to me; and his getting yours, doubly so."

"I will instantly make his acquaintance; and, for your sake, I will abate somewhat of my fastidiousness."

“ You need not, Sir Hubert—*he* can stand any test.”

De Lisle tried to smile, and involuntarily sighed. This was an affection worth having, so secure of the worth of the object ; the thrilling accent and modest blush of Jane Parry followed him to his solitary home. “ I have been tenderly, passionately loved,” thought he,—“ loved as I never shall be again ; but who ever felt the glow of pride and exultation at the bare mention of my name, and rejoiced that they loved me !” He sighed more heavily than before, and envied the poor country curate a heart he had never desired to win.

The following day saw him on the road to Captain Seymour’s ; the distance was not considerable, and he drove his curricie. He had rested his horses once before, and meant to stop again, at an inn off the high-road, within eight miles of the house to which he was going. As he drove into the yard, he saw a post-chaise with the Seymour arms, and naturally asked for Augusta.

“ Yes, Sir,” replied the landlord, “ the lady has been here some time waiting for you.”

De Lisle thought she must be gifted with second sight, as he had announced his intention

to no one ; but, following the man closely, was still more surprised, as the door was thrown open, to hear himself announced, " Lord George Levayne ! "

Augusta sprang from a couch on which she was reclining, and exclaimed, " I thought you would never come ! " Suddenly meeting his eye she shrieked, and, falling back on the sofa, said slowly, " Sir Hubert De Lisle ! then I am lost indeed. "

" Rather saved, I hope, my dear Mrs. Seymour ! " he said, gently taking the hand she had at first held out. She withdrew it in anger.

" Where, " she asked, " is it Captain Seymour's will that I should go ? I am not bound to listen to your reproofs, I presume. I never should have suspected you of so base a plan. "

" I do not yet know of what you suspect me. I was going to visit you ; I inquired for you here,—am announced by mistake, under the very last name I should be desirous to assume,—and find you as much disappointed as I am shocked. "

" And is this really all ? And have you not seen Seymour, or stopped Lord George ? And will you not betray me ? "

" Not if you return with me to your own

house ; but if you persist in waiting the leisure of that cold-hearted profligate at a public inn, you betray yourself. Nothing I could say would go beyond the fact—a fact, Augusta, that would bring your father's grey hairs with sorrow to his grave !”

Mrs. Seymour actually screamed with passionate emotion ; and burying her face on the couch, clung to it as if she would communicate to the senseless furniture some of her own turbulent feelings. At last, exhausted with her own violence, she suffered De Lisle to raise her ; and for the first time, looking attentively at him, she remarked his black dress and pale dejected face. “ Does it grieve you so much,” she said with emotion, “ to lose your father ? What will become of me when I have murdered mine !”

De Lisle took advantage of the new turn her imagination had taken, and after some soothing and remonstrance induced her to return with him, as he had at first proposed. He next wished to dissipate the suspicions he doubted not had arisen in the breast of mine host and others of his household ; and intreating Augusta to veil a face blistered with weeping, rang for her carriage, and left a particular message, that

he and Mrs. Seymour had waited some time to shake hands with Lord George Levayne as he passed, but that they were unable to wait any longer.

Augusta feared this message would be attended with serious consequences to De Lisle; but he laughed at the idea, and assured her he doubted not Lord George would never be there to receive it. He was there, however, soon after they left it, having been detained by an accident to his carriage; and was equally astonished and indignant at finding who had borne away the lady. He would gladly have shot the aggressor on the spot; but he considered his best chance of getting Mrs. Seymour into his power would be to keep the circumstance of his vicinity as secret as possible from her officious friend. He therefore wrote for the present only to Augusta; and such was the influence De Lisle's arguments and judicious kindness had gained over her, that, after a short struggle with herself, she showed him the letter, and wished to be guided by his advice in the reply. He complimented her upon this earnest of good resolutions, in the hope to strengthen them by praise; but he sighed over the unstable mind on which the peace of so many was anchored.

It had never occurred to Captain Seymour, that, having chosen so young, so pretty, and so giddy a wife, it became his duty to guide her. He began by quarrelling with her if she displeased him; and ended by not caring enough about her to lose his temper. A disposition like Augusta's found this utter disregard and carelessness worse to bear than his former violence. While he worried her, she was angry, but still loved him; when he neglected and forgot her, she thought herself justified in seeking attention elsewhere. Vanity and giddiness entangled her in a serious flirtation with Lord George Levayne; but there was so much more fancy than real passion in the case, that, removed from his immediate influence, she discovered daily how little she had ever cared for him. His apparent devotedness contrasted with the indifference she met at home; and his admiration, whether feigned or sincere, of her talents and her beauty, was peculiarly soothing to one who felt herself neglected and ill-used by another.

She had lived in the fashionable world till she had forgotten the proper epithets to apply to actions. She heard of women who had thrown away all claim to consideration, having been "mistaken in their conduct;" of men whose

actions were dishonourable, having been "unfortunate in speculation"—being "under a cloud" that was soon to pass away. These apparently lenient expressions seduce the young into a belief that those polite persons who cannot name guilt are supremely benevolent. Augusta adopted the phraseology she was in the habit of hearing used; and with it, all the slackness of principle that is the consequence of glossing over vice and calling things by their wrong names.

"How dreadfully wicked!" thought Augusta sometimes.

"How strange to be so absurd!" was echoed around her.

"That must be a good man!" she would say on hearing an amiable action recorded.

"Oh, the best man in the world! but horribly tiresome, and always thinking one means wrong, when one has no meaning at all!"

Mrs. Seymour of course laughed, and avoided so rigorous and fatiguing a person, nor did she give herself time to consider that those who are so ready to depreciate virtue upon all occasions, cannot be suspected of charity and good nature, when they countenance vice. After she left town and Lord George, she began to suspect she

was on the edge of a precipice, from which a retreat might still be effected ; but temper interfered to frustrate her good intentions.

Captain Seymour, affronted at some piece of carelessness in the domestic arrangements of the family, that interfered with his individual comfort, expressed himself with more bitterness than might have suited a more serious occasion. Among other things he told her, " It was rather hard upon her, considering that she had a head for nothing but dressing and flirting, that not one of her admirers cared for her when she was out of sight, or would be troubled (supposing they could get her) with so idle a fine lady for a wife !"

One whose vanity has been less nurtured and invigorated by circumstances, may not see how deep was the wound inflicted by this sarcasm.

Augusta said nothing, but she thought of Lord George. " When I *am* gone, perhaps," said she to herself, " he will see I was of more consequence to others, and may lament that I was of so little to him."

Thus, to the wish of vindicating the power of her own charms, and the latent hope of being regretted by the man she disgraced, did this heedless young woman sacrifice her naturally

good feelings and consciousness of what was right. The chance that saved her, struck her lively imagination as a special interference of Providence in her behalf.

Her gratitude and admiration for De Lisle brought her nearer to being positively in love than she ever had been in her life; and she naturally enough cherished an enthusiasm, in the blaze of which alone she could lose the painful feeling of degradation his presence could not but inspire.

Sir Hubert's self-love was but little flattered by this incipient passion. He despised her, perhaps, more thoroughly than she deserved; and was ready to censure severely the coquetry of which he had beheld the results, though until that moment he had viewed it with a smile of indulgence, as an error belonging to youth and high spirits, which time would not fail to dissipate. He concealed his real feelings, however, under the veil of good-breeding and friendliness, for every one likes to complete his work; and having been fortunate enough to save Augusta once, he was willing, by gentleness and attention, to fix her wavering spirit, and keep her steady to her own good intentions.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE principal, or at least, first object of the visit, was not forgotten. De Lisle made acquaintance with Mr. Solway, and was almost afraid he was too merry, poetical, and diverting, to make a steady and pious clergyman. He heard him preach, and was much pleased, but he remembered that was but a small part of the duty of a man in his profession, and anxiously gathered opinions respecting his other qualifications. Captain Seymour was loud in the praise of his friend; but he was not a very religious man himself, so that his eulogium on him as "a famous parson!" rather revolted than attracted De Lisle. That he might know what every one said, he applied to Augusta. She coloured, and looked uncomfortable, but with great eagerness expressed her belief in the numerous perfections of Mr. Solway.

“ Why, then, do you not like him ? ”

“ He does not like me,” said Mrs. Seymour quickly ; “ and perhaps I deserve it ; but it is not like him to bear malice so long. He had a sister he was very fond of, who married what is called well ; that is, a rich capricious simpleton. She came into this neighbourhood on a visit ; and her husband, for want of something to do, chose to declare himself an admirer of mine. I really did not encourage the man particularly ; but I suppose Mr. Solway and his sister thought otherwise ; for the former spoke to me with a severity I thought then rather impertinent, and the latter fretted herself sick. I was sorry she was such a fool ; for he was not worth it in the first place ; and certainly it was her very worst chance of regaining him, supposing, that is, that a man fairly tired of his chain ever is regained.”

“ Not, I should think,” said De Lisle, “ as long as the chain is bare and cold, but I have seen it so cunningly interwoven with roses, that its real nature could not have been guessed at.”

“ I don’t know,” said Mrs. Seymour, “ whether the lady ever found those roses, for I have not beheld her or her husband since, and should

have forgotten their existence, but for an occasional grave look, or icy remark from Mr. Solway, which shows that he has not ceased to consider me as accessory to the sufferings of a person he loved."

"I give you some credit for the generosity with which you speak of him then. It is easy for a good-natured person like yourself to forgive an injury; but where we have inadvertently inflicted one, it is very painful to meet the sufferer."

"The hard thing is," interrupted Augusta, who was willing to excuse herself, "that I did *nothing*—actually. If Solway's brother offered me his arm when I wanted it—if he called my carriage when Seymour would have let me call it for myself, was I to quarrel with the man for his civility? I am sure half the time when he would be speaking to me, I was thinking of something else, for he was a person who did not want to be answered."

"See, then," said De Lisle, in the playful manner of one who was willing to appear in joke, "the misfortune of being thought to feed on admiration. The most perfect indifference on your part will never secure you from the suspicion of design."

"But that is not my fault — I am sorry for it, but how can I help it?"

"When you ask that question seriously, I will give you a serious answer; or rather, by the time you feel honestly disposed to ask it, you will be perfectly able to answer it yourself. You and I, Augusta, have very foolishly allowed the world to fix characters upon us we might have avoided, had we in early youth attached sufficient importance to the opinion of others. I am thought a misanthrope, and you a coquette. Time will probably fix me down into what I have been falsely thought to be; but time, which is my enemy, will be your friend. You have good abilities and good taste, and both will teach you to give up a life of frivolous idleness, pardonable only in a very young person. You are now at the head of fashionable society, but in a few years, younger, if not handsomer women, will step forward and claim your place. To retain it, will be a hard, humiliating struggle. The wise thing, therefore, will be to recede gracefully before your situation has been disputed, and turn your mind to other pursuits, and your time to better account."

"To suckle fools and chronicle small beer?" asked the lady, contemptuously.

"As I am not Iago, I could find you better employment, but I leave you to find it for yourself."

"Why, what," cried Augusta, more seriously, "could I ever do with Seymour? He could never be a companion, if I tried to make one of him."

"May be not: however, the experiment might be worth making; but I don't recommend it, because I don't choose to bear the weight of your displeasure, should it fail."

Mrs. Seymour reaped more benefit from this conversation than she would have done some months before. Experience had taught her to what her careless conduct might lead, and there were some things which, having been taught to feel, she could not altogether refuse to think about. Her naturally high spirits had received a shock she could conceal from others, but not from herself. She was unhappy, and longed for bustle and gaiety to deaden some recollections and efface some impressions sufficiently irksome. Fortunately, these resources were denied her, and she turned in despair to occupations which she had forgotten.

She pursued them at first with little interest, but her natural elasticity of temper stood her

friend, and De Lisle was glad to leave her in a more comfortable and even state of spirits than he had imagined possible. The day of his departure, Captain Seymour went to a neighbouring town on some justice business; for he flattered himself he was an excellent magistrate, and certainly was an active one. Mrs. Seymour had taken out her children to walk, followed by their maids, (for a fine-lady mother must always have some one at hand to manage her own offspring,) when Lord George Levayne, who had never left the neighbourhood, took advantage of the absence of Seymour, and still more of that of Sir Hubert De Lisle, and presented himself before her. Augusta did not shriek, but she turned very sick, and mechanically grasped the hand of her little girl, as if for protection. The child, terrified at the sudden appearance of a stranger, looked at her mother, and gathered still more alarm from her pale bewildered face. She clung to her, and set up a shout that quickly recalled those who had wandered from them. Children and nurses, now equally scared, poured out of the plantation, expecting to see a mad bull at least. The latter were much comforted at perceiving only a gentleman.

“ Do send those squalling brats and officious

maids out of the way," said Lord George in Italian. "I have a right to demand a hearing at least, after the strange inconsistency of your conduct."

"It is very true," said Augusta, still trembling, "but you can say what you like in Italian. I cannot part with my children."

"Indeed!" said Lord George, with malicious emphasis. Augusta coloured and looked down; but when Lord George told the nurses they might take the children home, she exerted herself to forbid their departure.

"You had better not brave me," he said with a haughty savage look; "your new lover, De Lisle, is not here to protect you." Lord George lost sight, in the angry feeling of the moment, of the prudence with which he had hitherto conducted his intrigue. He had successfully worked on the vanity and levity of his fashionable cousin; but when he tried to work upon her fears, he was baffled.

"My Lord, my Lord!" said Augusta, in the tone rather of admonition than supplication, "is it manly thus to insult an unprotected woman? You have influenced me too long and too far already—but that, remember, was by gentler means!"

“Do you betray me, and expect me to be gentle? Why will you punish me so severely for an accident, over which I had no control?”

“It is no punishment, but an escape for both you and me. It saved us from guilt: let us be thankful for it, and profit by it.”

Lord George still continued to plead; and as he was now mild, sad, and tender, he might have recovered his former influence, had Augusta's heart been touched, instead of her fancy. But where no answering feeling meets the impassioned assertions of a lover, they appear more ludicrous than affecting. Mrs. Seymour was too much shocked and pained by this interview to be much alive to absurdity; but she listened with an altered mind, and wondered such arguments could ever have carried weight with them.

When the pleader found his empire at an end, his stifled anger burst forth, and he revenged himself on the victim that had broken from his thralldom, by painting her conduct under the most odious colours. The bitterness with which he reproached and ridiculed her, betrayed the cold heart she had been so proud of reigning over. He threatened her with disclosing her former resolution of elopement to

her husband, with sending him her letters, with asserting even what was false, but what would seem more than probable to the susceptible Seymour.

Augusta thought a man who could speak to her as he was doing, would have little hesitation in conducting himself as he said he would. She had braved disgrace for an object which she deluded herself into the belief might be worthy of the sacrifice; she had rushed from a home, in which there was much to vex and harass, in search of one she vainly imagined had halcyon days to offer her; in the effervescence and infatuation of an undisciplined spirit, she had courted evil, because she had not fathomed its depth; but now that time and reflection had sobered her, now coolly to stand still and be overtaken by shame,—it was too much to bear, and the light of frenzy was in the eye she turned upon her tormentor. She seized her youngest child in her arms, and, without any definite object but that of escape, sprang forward, and fled homeward with the fleetness of an antelope.

Lord George, the servants, the other children, all pursued, but none came near to her. Panting and breathless, she reached her own

apartment, double-locked her door, and throwing the infant on the couch, sank herself on the floor, exhausted and bewildered. The little boy, who had been delighted with his rapid flight, laughed and clapped his hands, and courted his mother's attention in every possible way. His efforts were vain, and soon terrified at receiving no answer, he began crying, which directed the nurse in her search for her mistress. Unable to open the door, she sent a man with a ladder to get in at the window and admit her; which he did, and then assisted to place the insensible Mrs. Seymour on the couch. She recovered from one fainting fit only to go into another; and when Captain Seymour reached home, he found half his servants dispersed in search of their medical practitioner, and the others eager to tell him a tale of which he understood not one word.

Augusta frightened by a foreign gentleman, whose language they did not comprehend! Why was a foreigner to frighten her particularly, who never, that he remembered, had been alarmed in her life? He went up to her room, raised her in his arms to bring her nearer the open window, and laying her down again, gazed on her death-like features with an emotion he

did not think she could have excited. He had seen her gay, blooming, and brilliant; he had sometimes seen her feverish and complaining; he had never seen her thus,—and the stillness of a countenance, hitherto so animated, chilled his heart, and bewildered his imagination.

The first shock of surprise was succeeded by considerable anxiety, when the village doctor honestly confessed the case to be alarming, and to him inexplicable. A messenger was sent off for the nearest physician; and in the mean time Seymour was warned not to show himself abruptly to his wife. He promised obedience, but, impetuous in all his feelings, he no sooner heard Augusta raise her voice feebly, to murmur some indistinct question, than he drew aside the curtain behind which he was sitting, and asked her how she felt. Mrs. Seymour on beholding her husband, with whose appearance she connected the threats of her lover, sprang suddenly off the bed, uttering a cry so loud and piercing, that it rang for many days in Seymour's ears, and even made Mr. Solway (who had been summoned to his friend's assistance) recoil some paces with an involuntary shudder.

All attempts to soothe and pacify her were vain. She seemed utterly unable to listen to

any one ; raved piteously, till overtaken by convulsions more distressing than her former tranquil insensibility. A strong opiate having been forcibly administered to her, she lay many hours in a state of torpor ; and even when she shook it off for a moment, it was evident her mind continued influenced by it ; for though she took the nourishment or the medicine offered her, she appeared unwilling or unable to speak, and to have but one wish—to close her eyes and forget all that surrounded her. Immediate danger was pronounced to be over on the following day ; but she was extremely feeble, nervous, and so low, as hardly to have any perceptible pulse.

The medical gentlemen did not seem to comprehend her malady much more than her husband did its cause. Captain Seymour, indeed, had ascertained that the person from whom she had so precipitately fled was her cousin, Lord George ; but the motive of that flight was not the less an enigma. Although he had not entered his wife's apartment since the moment when his unexpected appearance had so considerably aggravated her disorder, he did not like to leave the house until she had made more progress towards convalescence. He,

however, mentioned to Solway his intention, when she was decidedly better, of finding out Lord George, and inquiring from himself, if he could explain so singular a circumstance.

To do Seymour justice, his guesses were all remote from the truth ; but Mr. Solway, who thought, perhaps, even worse of Augusta than she deserved, had a secret misgiving that prompted him to offer to find out Lord George, and satisfy Captain Seymour's curiosity. He thought Lord George would probably be nearly as willing to conceal any thing disgraceful to his cousin as she could be herself, and that he would make out a better story to him, (who only desired a plausible one to carry back to his friend,) than he would, perhaps, be able to arrange for the satisfaction of Seymour in person.

His departure was hardly arranged when the papers were brought in, and the first paragraph that struck Seymour's eye, was the following :

“ We lament to state, a meeting took place this morning, in the neighbourhood of the Park, County of ———, between two gentlemen standing high in the fashionable world, whose names we refrain to mention from motives of delicacy. The younger one (son to a noble

Marquis) has, it is feared, paid for the rash act with his life. His antagonist, (a baronet but lately come to his title and estate,) though severely wounded himself, was recommended to abscond; with which advice he has prudently complied. The dispute, it is said, originated about a dashing lady, wife to one of our most gallant naval officers, and cousin to the unfortunate youth who has fallen. Particulars have not reached us; nor do we know whether this lady, so famed for her attractions and admirers, was in any way to blame in the affair."

This mysterious piece of scandal was carelessly read aloud by Seymour, who saw in it no allusion to himself; and it was not till looking up at his friend, while he asked him if he could make any thing of it, that he read in his altered countenance an unexpected comment on the text. Seymour was frank and unsuspicious; but he was quick of apprehension, and terrible in his wrath.

"If I thought," said he, after a gloomy pause, and knitting his brows till they blended together,—“if I could believe that *her* name is the one implicated in this transaction—dying as she is, I would . . .” He stopped short, as un-

willing to trust his voice farther ; but made a motion with his hand as if he spurned some loathed object.

Solway looked calmly at him for a moment, then with his usual placid self-possession said, " I am pretty well accustomed to see you in extremes, Frank, but to-day I think you have out-heroded Herod ! " He alluded to a scene in the morning, when Seymour had wept at sight of his children, who were likely so soon to be motherless ; and he knew that by alluding to it he would give some turn to his friend's impetuous feelings.

" Where, I pray," cried Seymour vehemently but less fiercely, " is the inconsistency of mourning *their* mother innocent, and of shrinking from her when suspected, I do not say of guilt, but of levity—barbarous levity, for it has cost one man his life already ? "

" Is it, then, on such evidence you condemn your wife ? An obscure statement in a newspaper, you think, warrants your angry condemnation of one against whom no charge is brought, and who is unable to defend herself ! "

The generous heart of Seymour could not brook the tone of gentle reproach in which the last words were uttered. He confessed at once

that he was unreasonable and violent ; and then, exaggerating on the other side, expressed his firm belief that it was all calumny and misrepresentation. Still his feelings were too much on the alert to sit down tamely under his present suspense ; and concluding that, though Sir Hubert might have left the Park, he might be heard of there, he did not hesitate about going thither, absolutely refusing Solway's offered company. *He* was a man of peace from his profession, and no peace lived in the stormy breast of Seymour.

Solway saw him depart with unfeigned regret and alarm ; but, knowing the mischief he might do by betraying such feelings, he smoothed his brow, and tried to hope the best from De Lisle's known self-possession, and regard both for Seymour and his wife.

Augusta, in the mean time, continued in a state of apparent torpor, totally unconscious, or at least appearing to be so, of the absence of her husband. It was not of long continuance : he could gain no clue as to where Sir Hubert might be ; and his only reason for supposing him still in England, was the evident anxiety with which the Biscayan servant sought to persuade him he had gone abroad. Seymour could not un-

derstand De Lisle's concealing himself. It would have been so much more like him to have given himself up at once, and taken his trial. He owed Lord George no ill will; and his general character for beneficence and courtesy would of itself have convinced any unprejudiced person that he had not wantonly attacked the life of another. It was no otherwise to be accounted for, than by supposing the character of some third person might be compromised; but to what extent, or on what grounds, Captain Seymour and Mr. Solway were alike ignorant; nor was Augusta in a state to answer any question, or elucidate any obscurity respecting the transaction.

CHAPTER XVII.

A VERY short time made a considerable change in affairs. Lord George Levayne was declared to be out of danger: Mrs. Seymour was able to sit up, and to speak, though not to converse: and Sir Hubert returned to the Park, and instantly despatched the following note to Captain Seymour:—

“ Dear Frank,—I have just reached my own home, and find you have been inquiring for me there. I thank you for your kind anxiety, and propose being with you in a few days, to convince you, *maugre* all reports to the contrary, that I am nearly as well as Sir Peter Teazle: not quite as whole as that worthy personage, having my right hand in a sling, which obliges me to use my pen with my left; rather an inconvenient circumstance, both for myself and those

who have to read my writing ! Love to Augusta and the brats. Let me know if you shall be at home next week ? Yours,

“ H. DE L.”

Seymour did not quite know what to make of this. He did not delay informing Sir Hubert, that though Mrs. Seymour was unable to see any one, he should be happy to receive him as his guest ; but what to say to him when he did come, was perplexing. De Lisle, it seems, attributed his visit solely to personal friendship, and would never, he thought, have written in so jocular a strain, had he dreaded cross-examination of any sort. Mr. Solway was not quite of that opinion ; but he thought it was better that Seymour should think so ; and accordingly Sir Hubert had actually arrived before his host had made up his mind respecting the propriety of questioning him on what might be, and probably was, entirely his own concern.

As Augusta got better too, her husband considered he had a full right to examine her more narrowly than any one else ; and though she might have some interest in deceiving him, the chances were, it would be more difficult for her to effect it, than for De Lisle. He accordingly

received him in a half-cordial, half-sulky manner, which, however, warmed beneath the kind voice and friendly open look of the young Baronet. Even Solway was unable to come to any decision, and encouraged his friend to see every thing in the best light. To the surprise of every one, Augusta desired to see Sir Hubert and her husband. It was the first moment in which she had betrayed any interest in surrounding persons since her disorder; and Seymour promised himself to watch for any sign of intelligence that might pass between his wife and De Lisle. None such, however, did pass. She made a sign for her husband to sit at the foot of the sofa on which she was lying, told her little girl to give Sir Hubert the arm-chair, and did not address a single word to either of them. After they had remained there some time, Seymour asked if she was not weary of hearing them talk. To which she languidly assented, and they withdrew.

.. "The room was so dark," said Seymour to De Lisle, "Augusta did not see that your hand was supported."

"She could not see it," replied Sir Hubert quietly, "for I took off the silk handkerchief for fear of alarming her."

At this moment the little girl came forward with it in her hand, saying, "Mamma sent me to get this, and begs you will put it on directly."

"How did she know I wore it?" asked De Lisle.

"I told her," said the child.

"And did she know why it was worn, Julia?" asked her father.

"Yes, papa, I told her too!"

"And how did you know?"

"July won't tell!" cried the child triumphantly, and immediately took refuge in the sick room, whither she knew she would not be pursued. Seymour was half-angry with the child, and half-annoyed at betraying his displeasure.

"Children hear every thing," observed De Lisle, "especially what they should not hear; but as it has done Augusta no harm, it's of no consequence."

"I wonder too," said Seymour in an undertone, as if debating something with himself, "she should never have asked after her cousin. She used to patronize the puppy;" and he cast a scowling glance at Sir Hubert.

De Lisle met the look with more quietness than satisfaction, and, laying his hand gently on

Seymour's shoulder, said, " Well, Frank ! what is it now ? Out with it, man : if it be good, 'twill be pleasant to hear ; if bad, let's have it, and have done with it."

" I don't know," said Seymour in an accent of irresolution, for he felt at that moment ashamed of complaining of his wife ; " I believe I get ill-tempered, and Augusta don't take the way to make me better."

" Oh ! if that's all," said De Lisle, smiling, " I'll turn you over to your confessor here. I know nothing of matrimonial divisions, I thank Heaven !"

Seymour sighed : it was not a mere domestic disagreement that occupied him just then, but his thoughts seemed suddenly entangled, and when he spoke again, his method of alluding to the newspaper paragraph was at once abrupt and confused—so much so, indeed, that, had it suited De Lisle, he might fairly have pretended to misunderstand him. As if following the train of his friend's reflections, rather than the perplexed manner in which they were brought forward, he answered slightly, and somewhat disdainfully, as wondering a person of Seymour's knowledge of the world should feel hurt at any misrepresentations. Their being

misrepresentations was by no means clear to Seymour, but it appeared Sir Hubert did not understand the possibility of their being believed; and checked by his manner, and the habitual deference he entertained for De Lisle, he suffered the conversation to drop, and resumed, in a great measure, his naturally open cheerful manner.

Sir Hubert had not been long on his visit, when the fever he had shaken off with difficulty after the slight wound he had received, returned sufficiently to break his rest and enfeeble him, though not enough to confine him entirely to the house. One day he rose very early, from mere weariness of turning round and round in the same spot, vainly courting sleep. It was a lovely soft grey morning, that gradually brightened into warmer and more lively colouring as the sun arose. It was reviving to his feverish frame, and he wandered languidly about in the immediate vicinity of the house, without any definite object, until suddenly attracted by the tones of the organ to that part from whence they issued. This proved to be a small chapel, built by Seymour's mother, and where, during her life-time, the rites of the Roman Catholic

church had been regularly administered. While Lionel lived, the same priest who had been pensioned by Mrs. Seymour, continued to perform mass for the convenience of a few Catholics of the lower order in their vicinity; but the chapel was closed at his death, and the old priest was presented with a house at some distance, so anxious was the navy captain to get rid of all recollections of former times, which had been so far from agreeable to him.

When it was Augusta's turn to be mistress, she had an organ put up in the deserted chapel, and with a thoughtlessness peculiar to herself, made no other change in the fitting up of the building. This had often annoyed Solway, who could not bear the jests of the idle and profligate on arrangements of whatever sort made for religious purposes. Of late years indeed, the visits to the chapel had been rare; Mrs. Seymour having nearly given up playing on the organ, and no one in their neighbourhood having much taste for the instrument.

De Lisle entered the once sacred building with a sort of vague curiosity as to who could be the performer, and was almost startled at perceiving it was Augusta herself. Indeed, as

the light from the stained glass fell on her pallid face, it required no great effort of imagination to suppose the being who sat there, rather a shadow, representing a faint likeness of Mrs. Seymour, than a living material creature. Sir Hubert had entered softly, and at that hour Augusta dreamed not of intrusion. She continued therefore for some time, till, evidently too weak for farther exertion, her fingers flagged in the midst of a simple chant, and her head drooped for a moment like that of a person nearly fainting. De Lisle advanced to render any assistance in his power. At the sound of his step she started up, and, looking at him with a degree of breathless alarm that did not give her time to recognise him, she exclaimed—

“ Lord George, I do not fear you now ! ”

Sir Hubert immediately assured her he was not Lord George, and that she was not likely ever to be again annoyed by his appearance. She wept, and remained silent ; but as it was evident she now knew him, De Lisle thought this a good opportunity to inform her that she need not be uneasy about any letters she had written to her cousin, as they were in his possession, and he was ready to follow her directions either

in returning them to her, or in destroying them.

"How came you by them?" asked Augusta abruptly.

"By a fortunate chance," he replied.

Lord George had directed them to Captain Seymour, but the servant who was intrusted with them, had confided them to De Lisle's servant, who consulted his master as to their delivery. When this had been explained to Mrs. Seymour, she appeared to revolve some painful project in her mind. After a thoughtful pause, she exclaimed—

"I care not who reads my letters. Let them be sent as they are directed! Why should you have to answer their detention? you have already suffered too much for my folly."

"Augusta, let me hear nothing of this. I am equal to defending my own actions; and if you think I have acted the part of a friend, do not by your own imprudence neutralise all my exertions in your behalf."

"I am indeed," replied the lady with a sigh, "a most worthless object on which to lavish care and kindness. I would it were in my power to repay your services as you suggest, by following your advice; but I have made up my mind,

perhaps for the first time in my life, on principle. I will confess to my husband every vain and foolish thought, every guilty intention: I will submit to be spurned from him, for I shall not be pardoned—I know not that I desire to be so—I will meet the penalty I have incurred, and yield to the punishment I have deserved. I believe, as firmly as any Catholic who ever bowed at this altar, that there is no repentance without penance. After such a step, mine will be a life of penance; and shunned and desolate as I may be, it will be a consolation that I have deceived no one."

"It is a noble resolution!" said Hubert; "but there is madness in the execution. In pursuit of an imaginary duty, you sacrifice very real ones—those you owe to your children and to your parents. I am not sure that I might not say to your husband himself; for you have it in your power to make his home comfortable, and it will never be so, if you abandon it, whether voluntarily, or at his request."

"This," said Augusta, "is good worldly reasoning; and while I could conceal from myself the enormity of my conduct, I was influenced by it. Now the veil is torn away, by the only hand from whom I could never have

expected it. I have heard my evil purposes represented as heartless profligacy, and my bitter repentance as debility of mind ! I have lived to hear myself branded by epithets the vilest would shrink from ! The powers of my mind are broken—the blow has reached my heart. I never can communicate the cheerfulness I cannot feel ; and, instead of any comfort to Seymour, my presence would cast a damp on all his enjoyments. My children, too, will be as well looked after by hired nurses, as ever they have been by me ; and for their education, how should I affect to guide others, who have been unable to guide myself ?”

Mrs. Seymour paused from mere exhaustion, and closed her eyes, as if by so doing she could calm the inward struggle that, in spite of the firmness with which she spoke, communicated itself to her whole frame, producing a general tremor, which De Lisle dreaded to see end in convulsions. He besought her not to task her strength by farther conversation, and promised to write to her all he had more to urge on the subject, and finally to obey her commands, whatever they might be.—Accordingly he had hardly reached home, which he did the morning after their conversation, when he detailed at

length all the reasons he felt imperative against the meditated disclosure. He dwelt on Seymour's hasty temper, which would never give him time to weigh all the circumstances as impartially as another man might do; and the useless misery and disappointment she would inflict on her parents, whose pride and darling she had ever been. Augusta did not reply, and he hoped she had decided as he wished, and was on the point of destroying her letters, but did not like positively to do so without her sanction.

They were claimed shortly by Seymour himself. When he entered De Lisle's apartment, the latter instantly perceived, before he uttered a word, that Augusta had kept steady to her resolution; and his heart ached, as he took in at one view all the various misery that would be its result. He involuntarily cast his eyes to the ground without greeting his friend, and awaited in silence any communication from him. It was a brief petition for the letter or parcel directed to him by Lord George Le-
vayne; and Sir Hubert, opening his secretaire, produced and delivered it with a sigh. Some transient emotion appeared in Seymour's stern face on receiving it, but it vanished, and left a deeper gloom behind. When Sir Hubert saw that

Captain Seymour eagerly broke the seals that secured the parcel, he considerably withdrew, unwilling either to be a restraint on his feelings, or to witness any bursts of passion he might repent the having given way to before another.

He wondered whether Seymour would return home in the same uncommunicative temper in which he made his first appearance. His groom was walking the horses about to cool before the stable-door, and appeared not to expect his master to leave the Park that day, though, when questioned, he confessed he had received no particular directions, and had put up some of his master's things entirely of his own accord, because he was in the habit of doing so. Time wore away, and when dinner was announced, De Lisle did not know whether to summon his friend himself, or send the servant. He decided on the latter ; and, as is usual in doubtful cases of that nature, repented it immediately.

He began, however, to think it was perhaps for the best, when Seymour immediately obeyed the summons, and took the vacant seat at the table. The meal passed nearly in silence ; and it was evident, when Seymour did speak, he was not thinking of what he said. Sir Hubert, who had all his life long hated the system of

neighbours dropping in unexpectedly, now wished the thing were possible, so uncomfortable did he feel at the prospect of the *tête-à-tête* when the servants should withdraw.

They had not left the room many minutes, when Captain Seymour produced the parcel of letters, and pushing them to De Lisle, desired he would, at his leisure, look them over. Perceiving Sir Hubert make a sign, as if he would decline doing so, Seymour added, "I ask you to do it in justice to *her*. Had I seen the letters, and been unacquainted with after-circumstances, they would have excited neither anger nor jealousy in my mind. There are some complaints of me that possibly I may have deserved, some eulogiums on you which I think you do deserve—but no affection for Lord George, no esteem for him, no confidence in his slanders of me—nothing, in short, but the very blameable levity of suffering intimacy and listening to adulation from such a being."

Seymour paused, and De Lisle, encouraged by a look of softer sadness that stole over his blank countenance, ventured to say something soothing, and express compassion for Augusta. Seymour's features stiffened again. After a moment he said, "I have read your letter to her.

I think your advice as friendly to myself as to her, for whom it was principally intended. As far as I am concerned, there is an end of happiness. I may pity Augusta—I can never more trust her. The less we see of each other the better; but I will not cloud the few years that remain to General and Mrs. Parry by breathing a syllable of what I have heard. Mrs. Seymour may live by herself, and allow the separation to stand to the account of my temper, which you, in common with others, seem to be aware is not good; or she may inhabit a part of my house, and appear in public with me when absolutely necessary, as she judges best. I shall leave it to her to determine, when she is well enough to determine any thing. At present, she has a relapse of her malady, which may prove fatal.”

“And if it should so prove, Frank, you will repent, for the remainder of your life, not having granted a more generous forgiveness.”

“It may be so; but I have done all I am able to do.”

“I had hoped,” resumed De Lisle, “from Augusta’s delay, that I had convinced her she was ruining herself by the step she meditated.”

“She waited to hear of the departure of her

worthless cousin. He is gone to a milder air for the recovery of his health. She feared for my life," he added, with a look of haughty contempt; "but my honour she has not shrunk from periling."

"But the peril is past: and truly, Frank, I think your honour stands too high and bright, to have been sullied by the frailties of a misguided woman, had they really existed."

"If ever you give your name to another, Hubert, you will brook no more than myself, seeing it disgraced; but enough of this. I thank you once for all, for you have done us all much service, and were willing to do us more: now, if you would not try my temper beyond its feeble bearing, never revert to this fatal subject."

De Lisle willingly acquiesced in this restriction; and when he thought over the conversation, he saw, upon the whole, that things were in a better state than he had feared they might be. He foresaw with pleasure there would be no public separation; and if Augusta recovered any strength of body and vigour of mind, time would mend their situation. The first impression of present suffering would abate; their children, in growing older, would

draw the parents gradually nearer together ; and the mutual wish to make a good appearance to General and Mrs. Parry, might produce in time the harmony that at first was feigned. On the other hand, if Augusta died, she would probably be saved much misery, and be taken away at the moment of her life in which she had assuredly been best prepared for so great a change ; while Seymour, in a more fortunate union, would soon forget the discomfort of the first.

Still, though Sir Hubert saw a kind of way out of all this distress, it was not the less sad for being rather less perplexed ; and he could not help turning to the period when Augusta Parry spread around her an atmosphere of gladness, a tone of brilliancy, beside which most other women faded into colourless insignificancy. He remembered, too, when he had first seen Seymour, beneath the ennobling influence of Lionel, all bright and joyous with his freshly-gathered laurels. He could not but lament that both should so have obscured their own prospects ; for though far from exculpating Augusta, neither could he altogether acquit her husband. He was, upon the whole, pleased with her letters. They evinced considerable

talent, and in many things a singularly correct judgment. He was perhaps somewhat biassed in their favour by meeting with the following passages in one of them :—

“ And you really affect to be jealous ! Have I not told you I am born passionless ? If I love admiration, court amusement, and am thankful for sympathy, does it follow I am to be in love with those who offer the one or the other ? Then what a subject to fix upon ! the only man, perhaps, who would marvel at my fondness and repulse it—the only one, too, there would be no breach of duty to love ; and therefore, according to your own rules, a thing for which there is no temptation. No, believe me : I once loved Seymour, or thought I loved him, but he cured me by a most pleasing course of discipline, begun in harshness, ending in contempt”

“ I will hear no more of this nonsense. I forgave your querulous fit about my old flirt Hubert De Lisle, because the thing was really not impossible. He is handsome, clever, and amiable : nay, more to *me* than all that, for he is kind to me ! I took some trouble to calm your suspicions, for, as you know nothing of his charac-

ter, they were not unreasonable ; and if I described him through a quire of paper, you would be nothing nearer the understanding such a character. By his peers alone can he be judged ! Had I known in what true pride consisted, I would have sought in other days to make more of him, than he or I ever intended he should be made. I lost the golden opportunity, through the waywardness of a spoiled child who fears to be ruled ; and if he braved the danger in my girlish days, trust me, he is safe, now that I bear the name of his friend.”...

Part of another letter ran thus :—

“ You tell me, Seymour has a mistress ! What if he had ten ? His heart has long been estranged from me, and his fortune will bear many calls on it. I am sorry his taste should be so low—that is, I should be sorry if I believed it : but your report is, to say the best of it, tinctured with prejudice. As to the other anecdote, I tell you flatly, you have been misinformed. Charles Leven is not his friend, nor was he ever honoured even by his intimacy ; and Hubert De Lisle would never have made one of the party you describe. While you link my

husband's name with our oldest and best friends, you secure it at once from degradation. Besides, I know Seymour better. Oh, if his temper were as good as his heart ! if he loved me a little, only a very little ! . . . no matter what”

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIR HUBERT DE LISLE rose early in the morning that was to bring Mr. Solway. He had passed a restless night, pondering over every possible disadvantage that might accrue from having so near a neighbour, whom he would be called upon to see frequently. Previous to this, he had looked only at the bright side of the picture, and pleased himself with the thoughts of the happiness he should create for two deserving persons, and the pleasure it would be to himself to witness it. But, as the moment approached, a little of that distrustful temper, which he could not quite shake off, arose, and changed the nature of his meditations. Mr. Solway was doubtlessly a clever man, and a good man, and had every appearance of being an independent one also; but this might be only appearance. Jane was amiable, and at-

tach to him ; but they might nevertheless not be happy. A young man could not at first know all his parishioners, and devote himself to them in the way his predecessor had done, who had grown old amongst them, and was full of local attachments.

Sir Hubert considered and reconsidered, sighed, stretched himself, tried to go to sleep, and more than half repented engaging a person of whom he knew so little. Out of the immediate fascination of Mr. Solway's manner and conversation, he felt less certain of the high opinion he had formed of him. It could not now be undone, and he must receive him at breakfast as if no such uncomfortable doubts had arisen. He began to think this a great misfortune ; it seemed the foretaste of that constraint he was to inflict on himself for the rest of his life. With his equals, De Lisle could be careless ; but he was too generous to anticipate the moment when he might be tempted to neglect, and consequently to wound a man, whose situation in life was inferior to his own, and who was, besides, under some obligation to him.

From his immediate embarrassment he was relieved by a message from Mr. Solway, regretting that he could not breakfast with him. " Sa-

turday," he said, " was always a busy day with him ; and he found taking possession of his new abode would consume the little time he had to spare." De Lisle, at first, was well pleased to be alone, and to feel that all exertion, for that day at least, was spared him. But when he had fairly sat down to the breakfast-table, that had been enlarged, as a guest was expected, he was uncomfortable, and put out of his way: he smiled at his own captiousness, and taking up a book, soon lost sight of his imaginary distresses. It was evident, Mr. Solway would not cross his threshold that day, and Sir Hubert began to discover that solitude is indeed unnatural to man, by the number of times he walked unconsciously to that window of his study, from which he could see the smoke of the Parsonage rise through the trees. " That is dreadfully near," thought he sometimes, " if we should chance not to suit !"—but more frequently he gazed without comment, and felt an indefinite kind of satisfaction that there should be smoke again. He had missed it, and regretted its absence, as he had imagined, solely as a matter of taste ; but he now perceived the blank had spoken to him of desolation and death.

The next morning's bell summoned the whole

neighbourhood to church. It was an object to see what their new Pastor was like, and to have his sermon to canvass after church. Sir Hubert was never absent from his own church, though he rarely attended any other, thinking probably that the souls of his servants were of more consequence than his own; for he went, when at home, as a matter of example. Mr. Solway was already in the reading-desk when he arrived. He looked pale and anxious, and De Lisle, sympathising with his very natural nervousness, immediately drew the red curtains of his pew; the next moment he did him more justice, and felt that it was not the eye of a patron that could affect him at such a time. The young clergyman looked around him, and there were some present who could read in that look the religious spirit with which so awful an office was entered upon.

He began, and De Lisle followed him anxiously, and, in his wish that he should please, ready to think he had heard him read better before. Even his preaching, though always good, simple, and forcible, wanted, he thought, some of its usual spirit. He saw that he studied to be calm, and he feared that his quiet dignity might not attract all his hearers. On leaving

the church, he was surrounded by persons eager to praise the new rector. Some really liked him; some liked a young clergyman (who would probably not be afraid of the night-air) better than an old one; and all were aware, that to praise Sir Hubert's choice, was of course to praise himself. Mrs. Parry alone said not a word; but she smiled, and took his arm in a way that showed him she was possessed of her daughter's confidence. They walked a little way on to meet her carriage, and as she got into it, the tone in which she said "God bless you, my dear Hubert!" touched him deeply. He felt that a mother's heart thanked him for the happiness of her child, and he ceased to regret that he had so bestowed his living.

Emotions come with irresistible force over the soul for a moment, but it is principle alone that is the same to-morrow as to-day. Sir Hubert's was that peculiarly fortunate case in which, when emotion has subsided, principle is still there to enjoy less, but to judge better, and equally to approve. The evening had closed in, and he sat in his library with a newspaper in his hand, which he had begun by reading, but which had insensibly been converted into a screen from the fire, while he

gave audience to his own thoughts. A servant entered and announced the new clergyman. De Lisle had not expected to see him on a day so fully occupied ; but he rose to receive him with the more pleasure, perhaps, from that very circumstance. Nor was it diminished by the air and manner of his visitor. Mr. Solway returned the pressure of his patron's hand like a man who thanked him more for his sympathy than his bounty : he spoke without affectation of the feelings and the duties that had arisen.

"It has been an arduous day," he added, "and I looked forward to the relief of an hour's conversation here as a most refreshing circumstance."

Sir Hubert looked at the open intelligent face of his new friend, and saw he was speaking the exact truth : he was gratified, but also surprised, for it was treating him in a way to which he was not accustomed. To reserve and general indifference, that were perhaps constitutional, he had now added that confirmed indolence which is the portion of all those who believe they want nothing of others, and can dispense even with the pleasure of esteeming them. As a man of talents and polished manners, he had been courted in the great world ;

as the child of opulence, he had been approached by many who were willing to share it ; but by those with whom he was in the habit of associating, he was thought proud and unsocial ; and it was something quite new to him that a person with whom he had so slight an acquaintance, should look forward to his society as a moment not only of enjoyment, but of relaxation. He was himself apt to feel restraint in society ; and the coldness with which the sensation tintured his manner, naturally communicated the same feeling to the person with whom he conversed. But Mr. Solway was not at all a shy man.

He had seized at once the peculiarities of his character : he had taste enough to admire a good deal that others overlooked, and heart enough to feel what many did not even perceive. His active benevolence made him desirous to rescue from misanthropy one he thought born for better things. He sought him as a friend in whom he was ready to place confidence, and he was not deceived in his trust. Among the various topics discussed, the approaching marriage of the new rector was not omitted. De Lisle spoke of it as an anxious event to one who reflected like Solway.

"Not so," replied the young man; "I love Miss Parry, and I should not have loved her if I had not first trusted her. She will be making but an indifferent marriage in the eye of the world, but even the world will approve when they see it is a happy one. If I fear not even for *her* happiness, who will have sacrifices to make,—I cannot in reason have any doubt of my own, to whom it will be a matter of clear gain. I have not been in the habit of living much with sensible prudent women, and I have still less been in the habit of being a first object with any one. I assure you, I expect to find that both are very agreeable."

"I hope," said De Lisle with a smile, "there is not much fear of your being disappointed. I don't know a more amiable family than the Parry's, taken collectively. I have been looking all the morning for a paper given me many years ago by one of them, which may be useful to you, though doubtless many changes have taken place since." He handed it as he spoke to Mr. Solway, who found it to contain some account of the poor families in the neighbourhood; so short as to be little more than a memorandum, but which answered the purpose, at the time of its being written, of guiding the

charities of Sir Hubert, which were wont to be more munificent than judicious.

"When Ellen wrote that," resumed the Baronet, "she little guessed into how much better hands it would fall, or how nearly the person would be allied to herself. Jane was then a child; even Augusta was hardly a woman; and the family now so quiet and dispersed, was then the gayest and most numerous in the neighbourhood."

"Time," replied Mr. Solway, "must needs make changes, but no very afflictive or uncommon ones have happened there, I think; and though the past may be melancholy because it is irretrievable, unless it recal visions of bliss that have faded for ever, I know not that it should be a matter of regret."

"It could not well," gloomily answered De Lisle, "recal to me what never existed. I do not remember the moment when I ever thought myself positively happy; but I remember an indefinite expectation that I should one day become so:—*that* I have outlived; so that whatever I may think or feel about the present, the future, at least, will not cheat me any more."

"You are clearly cheating yourself out of the future, and may possibly behave no better

to the present ; but I am willing to concede more to you than most people would. I really think you an unfortunate person. You were born on the eminence others toil to ascend ; you have no object to gain, no difficulty to encounter, no precious being to shield. You must create your own pursuits, seek out things that may interest you, and perpetually find them unworthy of your interest."

" You seem," said De Lisle, " so well to know the root of my malady, that you have doubtless arrived at happiness by a very different road ; for you looked as if you enjoyed existence, even when I first knew you, and when an uncertain engagement might have clouded your thoughts."

" Perhaps I had better spirits than you ; however, my story is soon told, if you will be troubled to hear it."

CHAPTER XIX.

SIR HUBERT having expressed himself anxious to be better acquainted with Mr. Solway's former life, that gentleman immediately began to narrate it.

"The absurdity of telling what one remembers of oneself is very evident, since the hero of his own tale presents himself, of course, in the best point of view, and honestly forgets, or studiously omits, betraying feelings or actions that do not redound to his credit. I must leave it to you to separate egotism from fact in the best way you can, for I warn you I never had the heart to abuse myself.

"My father unluckily set out in life with the firm conviction of being one day possessor of the family estate, which was considerable. He had an elder brother, it is true; but then he was never to marry, being a wild sort of gen-

tleman, and having, I believe, in the warmth of fraternal regard, made his brother a promise of celibacy. That promise was kept as such promises usually are. The elder Mr. Solway, become old and infirm before his time, married his housekeeper to nurse him, which I believe she did very honestly, poor woman. But, what my father did not so easily forgive—she brought several fine children into the world, which effectually cut out his.

“ Frederick Solway had married on his prospects, and seemed in danger of starving on these, or rather on their failure. His case was now nearly as bad as possible; but he had the ingenuity to make it worse, for my mother dying about this time, he married a young girl, as deficient as her predecessor in worldly pelf, and in every other way her inferior. My young step-mother, embarrassed with the charge of so many children, for there were five of us, soon prevailed on my father to send my sister and me to school. I was about eleven years old, had been most carefully educated by my excellent mother, and having never studied a task as a punishment, set off very gaily to school, where I expected play-fellows, and of course friends. My eldest sister Antonia, though a

delightful companion in the house, and even in the flower-garden, was too delicate to share in my favourite pastimes, and my two other brothers were several years younger than I.

“ At first I was much mortified to find myself considered deplorably deficient in point of education. I saw my juniors every day placed above me,—nay, even very thickheaded fellows, with the experience of school routine, appeared to more advantage. Had I been shy or nervous, this apparent injustice would have broken my spirit. I was neither; and having first set myself to discover the cause of my failure, I next laboured to remove it. One of the elder boys, who was on the point of leaving the school, took a fancy to me, and put me in the way of overcoming all my difficulties. Happily for me, he stayed just long enough to give me a useful clue, and not too long to make me dependent on any but my own exertions.

“ I got on rapidly, and viewing myself and all around me with the most singular complacency, I became popular with my companions, and in favour with my masters. The latter circumstance excited at last a little envy: the school divided, a party formed for me and one against me, and our little state shook with

cabals, intrigues, and violence. I was very much amused with the whole business, delighted to be at the head of a party, for at every age man loves to rule; and not really in my heart disliking my adversaries, I had no unpleasant feeling in my opposition, and loved the fun that arose from the contest.

“ Feuds in the beginning are easily quelled, but where they last too long it is seldom that some malice or bitterness does not arise. One of the foe discovered my partiality for a Bible and prayer-book my mother had given me, and instantly my party was called the Methodists. I was aware that the epithet thus cast on us in derision intended to convey the idea that we were canting hypocrites; but as I had never preached religion, for the best of all reasons, that I seldom thought of it, I did not feel guilty enough to be hurt by the *sobriquet*. It did me, however, an essential service; it excited my curiosity as to the real meaning of the word. I wondered if my mother, so gentle, so pious, so benevolent, could have belonged to that class of persons. I puzzled myself not a little by listening to the various, and, as I thought, contradictory definitions of Methodism. I decided,

at last, that every thing people did not like was to go under that name.

“During the vacation, I mentioned what had been occupying my mind to Antonia. We had then been several years at school, and she had been less happy than I; for she was of a tender nature, and wanted the endearments and encouragement of home instruction. She grew up, therefore, serious and reserved; but her natural good understanding and judgment continued unwarped. She heard me with a smile, and told me we had in our vicinity a Methodist preacher, and that she would willingly accompany me to hear him, only she did not see how I was to judge of his tenets without first being certain of my own. I thought this but reasonable, and began to study the Bible, and one or two books she gave me, with my utmost diligence.

“Antonia did not appear to interfere with me, but she readily answered all my questions; and no doubt I adopted her faith and took it for my own. At last we went to the preacher’s she had named; and, though infinitely disgusted with his bad taste and worse language, his vulgar manner and coarse images, I had patience to hear him often enough to make myself master

of the peculiar tenets of his sect. Convinced they were not mine, I made an oration against Methodism on my return to school; but as I quoted the Bible to enforce my meaning, I was declared to be farther gone than ever in religious madness.

“ My adherents walked about with serious books in their hands, one-half of which they never read, or at least never understood. They looked on themselves, however, as deserving the palm of martyrdom; and some fanatical expressions of theirs being reported to the master, he sent for me privately, and begged of me to teach any thing I pleased, except religion. In vain I pleaded that I had never taught it, and utterly disapproved of the sentiments said to have been uttered by one of my party. The principal always suffers for the impolicy and violence of his followers, and I was told that I must see to it, for that I should be made accountable for all.

“ I had tasted the sweets of power, and now came its sting. To controul my schoolfellows in any thing unconnected with frolic and diversion, I knew, was beyond my ability. My credit was great, as long as I gave pleasure and diffused mirth; but to draw upon it more seriously

would exhaust it at once. I did all I could. I assembled my party, and implored them to read their books to themselves, if they chose it; but not to make them in any way a matter of show or topic of conversation. There were murmurings and discontent; but we parted, at last, in apparent good-humour. It was only apparent. One of the boys represented me as a cowardly deserter of my own cause, and summary punishment being high in favour with the ignorant and vehement, they determined, since I would not let them show *their* books, that they would destroy *mine*.

“A bonfire was kindled, and some of the opposite party invited to enjoy the sport. As each article of my property was cast into the flames, a general shout arose. At last, becoming more spiteful from the indulgence of mischief, one of them, as he was on the point of casting my favourite Bible into the fire, expressed particular exultation, because it was well known how much I prized this book, on account of the observations written in it by my mother.

“Young Lord Walone, who was chief of the other party, was a high-minded youth; a little too fond of his rank, and therefore apt to be

offended if he imagined it was but a slight thing in the eyes of others. His enmity to me had arisen from a fancied neglect on my part, which I would have apologized for at the time, had I not unhappily imbibed on my side so inordinate a veneration for the antiquity of my family, that I looked upon titles as perfectly contemptible beside it. Quite satisfied that Lord Walone (whose father had been raised to the Peerage) was my inferior, I could not show the respect I did not feel. I did not dislike him for his rank, but I forgot that it existed; and this oblivion was more galling to one of his disposition than positive defiance would have been. It was from such slight shades of feeling that our open opposition had arisen; but as we had no real bitterness in our tempers either towards people in general, or against each other, our hostility had not power to warp any natural rectitude of feeling or principle we might have possessed; and Lord Walone no sooner heard the speech of my quondam friend, than he arrested his hand.

“ ‘I will,’ exclaimed the young noble, ‘despoil and annoy the foe as long as he can retaliate, if opportunity serve: but the characters of the dead are sacred; we cannot restore them:

and, if I can prevent it, they shall not be destroyed.'

"The multitude, whether young or old, are proverbially changeable; the shouts and uproar died away, and many, checked in their career, grew cold and reluctant in the pursuit of even the minor branches of mischief. It was at this moment that I reached the spot. I ran hastily to the scene of tumult, in no small anxiety for my scanty library. I looked eagerly around for my favourite book; and the crowd, who suddenly sympathized with my uneasiness, just as if they had not been the authors of it, turned to Lord Walone, almost fearing he might not restore me what he had just preserved.

"He answered the general direction of their eyes by coming forward and presenting me the book. He was too proud to add a word of explanation; and his air was not only cold, but almost scornful, as if he feared the action might imply a wish to conciliate me. Fortunately, I am not suspicious, or the sight of the burning fragrances of my library, combined with this book in the hand of my enemy, might have induced me to surmise that he was the contriver of this unpleasant scheme of spoliation; and the surmises of children are usually followed by

accusation. I formed no conjecture, lost no time in suspicions, but directly inquired who had done me this evil, and why? There ran a murmur through the juvenile assembly, but none seemed disposed to stand up as the abettor or apologist of the wrong that had been done me.

“‘At least,’ I exclaimed, ‘if I am not to know who has injured me, tell me who has served me? To whom do I owe the preservation of this book?’

“Instantly many voices arose to bear testimony to the exertions of my enemy: I looked around for him—he was gone. I inquired the way he had taken, and lost no time in following him. I leaped a stile at the foot of our playground, and beheld the object of my pursuit seated on the bank on the other side of the hedge, apparently occupied in gazing at something he held in his hand. He looked up at my sudden approach, and coloured, as he was apt to do when any thing affected him. He arose, and holding out to me the piece of card he had been contemplating said,

“I did not mean to retain this; it fell by accident out of your book.”

“It was a small, but very spirited sketch of Antonia, which I had been looking at but the

evening before, and, instead of restoring to its case, had from laziness placed it in the book I was reading. I cannot tell you at this distance of time the exact words of the conversation that ensued ; but I conclude I was very eloquent in my thanks, for the pride of Lord Walone gave way ; and as he was not a person to do things by halves, we no sooner decided that we were not enemies, and never could have been intended to be so, than we discovered we were exactly formed to be friends. How much the picture of Antonia contributed towards effecting this discovery, I cannot pretend to say ; it is certain that Walone felt and expressed the most lively admiration of its beauty, and no small desire of becoming acquainted with the original.

“ This was effected sooner than either of us thought likely. We both left school for college a few months after our new-born friendship commenced. Walone was two years my senior, but circumstances over which we had no controul delayed his reception at the University, and accelerated mine. Since the period of my uncle's disgraceful marriage, no intercourse had existed between him and my father. He heard of me by chance from a schoolfellow, and

was so well-pleased with what my good-natured companion thought fit to relate of me, that he wrote to the master of the school, to say, that if his account of my conduct and abilities tallied with the one which had reached him, he desired I might be informed that he would pay my college expenses.

“ I had the good luck to be a favourite with the master, who immediately sent for me; and instead of showing me the letter, in which were many observations, and a general tone of arrogance, that would have revolted me at once, he mentioned my uncle’s offer as the kindest, most useful, and most flattering that could be made me, and congratulated me on being the means, through my general popularity, of healing a family breach which ought never to have existed. I was pretty well aware that my father never could be got to acknowledge for his sister so vulgar and lowborn a person as Mrs. Solway, but I was not insensible to my own improved prospects. I had sighed to go to college, and, though I never said so, felt that the thing was impossible. My father’s pride would prevent my going upon an uncomfortable footing, and his poverty would hardly allow of my going on any other.

“ I was dazzled and delighted ; at the same time I felt hurt for my father that the offer should not have been made to him. My master, compassionating my perplexity, told me I need do nothing at present, as he must first answer Mr. Solway’s letter, and it would be time enough for me to thank him when I was supposed to be acquainted with his good intentions ; that, in the mean time, he would write a line to my father and place the matter in a proper light. You will think me very vain to mention my father’s answer, but the impression it made on me was so great I cannot refrain from it. He wrote a very short acknowledgment of my master’s letter, and signified his consent to the arrangement ; not in direct terms, but by the following phrase :—

“ ‘ I am glad my brother has discernment enough left to appreciate Frederick’s talents, and to feel that he is reflecting honour on the family by giving them a wider scope.’

“ To you there can be little in these words beyond the expression of parental pride ; to me they were as a talisman. I knew that my father was in the habit of admiring all that be-

longed to himself in any way, and had at all times overrated his children. I was so well aware of this, that I fancied myself neither the better nor the cleverer for the eulogium ; but it affected me inexpressibly—it is so pleasant to know that people are proud of you ! I was so enchanted to see it was that feeling which saved my father all bitterness and mortification at receiving benefits from a person with whom he was not upon terms !

“ The intoxication of these thoughts was somewhat calmed by a cold epistle from my uncle, desiring me to visit him on my way home. I did so, and was rather annoyed to find my benefactor an opiniated, dictatorial old man, and his wife coarser in face, form, manners, and disposition than any one I had ever met with. The children were worse educated than any thing you can imagine ; cowed in their father’s presence to be petted by their mother. I escaped from this ill-managed family to my own quiet home, where my stepmother at least looked and spoke like a gentlewoman ; and my dear Antonia, like some poet’s vision, seemed to inspire all who approached her with some of her own elegance and loveliness. I spent a few very happy weeks, and then plunged into a very different world,

but which had, at least, the attraction of novelty.

“ I was called home to witness much affliction. A contagious fever had long been in the town nearest my father’s dwelling ; it at last reached his family. All the children were attacked, and two fell victims to it. These two were my next brothers ; they were very fine boys ; and poor Antonia was particularly attached to them, because, as soon as she came from school, they had been given up to her management, and had received instruction from none but her. I feared her tender nature would sink beneath the blow, and was but little comforted to see her look calm, and strive to occupy herself as usual. Grief could not with her express itself with vehemence or bitterness, but it preyed upon her, and silently wore away her strength, both physical and mental. She had never had high spirits, and as she seemed after our loss but little paler or thinner than before, and smiled almost as often, my father thought her recovering.

“ He yielded, however, to my wishes, and agreed to send her from home for a little change. It was a great exertion to her, and she opposed it at first ; but perceiving I had set my heart

on the plan, she gave a reluctant consent. She was to make a tour in Wales, with a very pleasant person, a distant relation of my mother's, and to pay several visits with her on their way home. There is an age when the mind, broken in to suffering, surmounts it better quietly and alone ; but young minds are susceptible of many impressions, and in the pleasure of a new feeling and a freshly-acquired idea, much of former painful thoughts fades imperceptibly away. It was so with Antonia : delighted with beautiful scenery, a language and manners of which she knew nothing, her spirits regained their elasticity and her mind its tone. She was able to enjoy her visits, which, when she left home, she thought so impossible, and I had the pleasure of hearing of her from every one as looking more beautiful and cheerful than ever.

“ Among the houses at which she was staying, none was quitted with so much regret as Walone Park. The young lord was then at home, and his enthusiastic admiration of my sister seemed so natural, that even his father and mother, Lord and Lady Victor, did not consider it as likely to become serious. Lady Victor was a relation of ours, and a good-na-

tured woman: she admired Antonia so much herself, that she would not have forgiven her son for neglecting her; but as the title was not rich, she did not wish her son to marry any one so deficient in fortune as my sister. Walone, aware of this, affected an air of levity in his admiration, that blinded his parents, but often deeply wounded the object of his attachment.

“She returned home more lovely than I had yet seen her, and with so bright a colour, that she almost forfeited her former appellation of the *blush rose*; but she had a restless, unquiet countenance, so unlike the calm and serenity I was wont to admire on her features, that I did not half like the change. I had no opportunity of ascertaining from whence it proceeded, for my uncle was impatient for my visit; and as he was really kind to me, I tried to overcome the dislike I felt to staying with him. Time passed on:—I was aware Walone saw my sister frequently, but I thought nothing of it; and satisfied that she was well, and as comfortable at home as our straitened income admitted of her being, I turned my mind wholly to my profession, which was the law; I removed to town and studied very perseveringly.

“Just as I was upon the point of setting

forth in the world by myself, and going my first circuit, my uncle cast me off. Two of his daughters were then young girls, that might have been taken into public, had there been any one capable of taking them out. As there was not, they saw but little company, and that of so inferior a sort, that I was looked upon as a very great person, and much pains taken to please me. I was obliged to them: they were good-humoured giddy things, ignorant enough, but they were my cousins; and I was glad sometimes to escape from their father and mother, to walk, or dance, or play with them. If they could not converse, they were very good romps; and as I had high spirits, I was content to take them in their own way.

“The familiarity this way of going on produced, was mistaken by Mrs. Solway for affection, the most unlike thing to it possible; and she communicated her opinions to her husband. He was rejoiced at the circumstance, but desired nothing might be said to me till we were all older. Mr. Solway nourished his project in silence two years, during which time he so often thought himself so peculiarly generous to give his daughter and her fortune to his penniless nephew. that he could of course not be prepared for any

disappointment. Mrs. Solway had talked her eldest girl into the belief of my attachment and her own; so that when I was summoned to listen to this family project, I found it all so arranged, that it seemed scarce possible to escape. I pleaded in vain my youth and poverty, and took refuge in what I believed to be my cousin's indifference, but I found myself met at every point.

"I was inexpressibly annoyed, but not for a moment undecided. I said every thing I could think of that was grateful to my uncle and kind and affectionate to my cousins; but announced my determination to marry neither of them. Mr. Solway had more patience with me than he was apt to have with any one, and talked of giving me time to consider; but the discussion was so disagreeable to me, that I determined it should never be renewed; and irritated by this eagerness to put an end to his long-cherished scheme, he gave way at last to his indignation, forbade me his house, and never saw me after.

"His two daughters married shortly after: the one I was to have taken in spite of myself, ran away with an actor, whom she had fallen in love with merely by seeing him on the stage, and

was never forgiven by her father. The other was united to a very respectable man in trade, who quarrelled with my uncle about her fortune, which Mr. Solway chose to retain in his own hands, more from the love of power than from any tincture of avarice. Meanwhile my prospects were somewhat overcast; but I was young and sanguine, and never repented the refusal that lost me my uncle's favour. Privation was not new to me; for, though my allowance had hitherto been ample, I had spent it almost all on my father and his family.

“ I lost, therefore, a most lively gratification, but no individual indulgence; and it is the lamentations of egotism alone that give darkness and discontent to vexation. I worked hard, formed pleasant acquaintance, and though I would not particularly desire to go over again that period of my life, I did not want for agreeable moments, or even for great pleasures, when I held in my hand a letter from Antonia. I had not been at home for a year and a half nearly. When I did go, how was I shocked at the change in my late blooming sister! When the first flush of joyful emotion at meeting had subsided, her complexion faded to the uniform transparent whiteness of alabaster: her heavy

blue eyes, that used to seek mine with so much pleasure, sank languidly beneath my anxious gaze ; and her bending, feeble form had an appearance of helplessness so foreign to the airy grace for which it had been so admired, that I could hardly fancy her the same person.

“ My father I found almost accustomed to the change. He said she was not what she had been ; and he had tried several things at first, but with little effect, and feared she would now always be delicate. I could not think that was all ; and, for the first time in my life, I looked to the future with dread. Antonia was tolerably cheerful, but she was unable to make the smallest exertion either of mind or body ; and evidently shrank from emotion, as feeling herself too feeble to contend with it. Mary, the youngest of my mother’s children, was doatingly fond of her, and watched her with the greatest assiduity. She soon confided all her fears to me, and expressed much bitterness against Lord Walone, who was, she said, the cause of all Antonia’s suffering. The notion that any one could trifle with her feelings and endanger her life, fired my blood at once. I never remember to have been furiously angry with any one before or since. My violence

terrified my young sister, who sought to palliate what she had said; but I was no longer reasonable, and would be satisfied with nothing short of the whole history of Antonia's attachment.

"It was soon told. Lord W. loved her as soon as he saw her, and told her so: he trusted to time for bringing the consent of his parents. Confident in his own constancy, he did not see the endless anxiety to which he exposed my sister. To a noble temper a clandestine engagement is inexpressibly galling: her delicacy was wounded at the thought that she could never be cordially received by her lover's family, and would always be looked upon as having injured him. She had neither spirits nor strength to contend with her uncertain fate. It was a perpetual struggle, that required less feeling and more energy than was her portion. Men have many things to do and to think of, which are unconnected with each other; but women's feelings are more exclusive. There is no pursuit, how simple soever in appearance; no contemplation, however sublime in fact, with which they do not continue to blend the recollection of a beloved object. It is the one present thought that gilds or embitters every thing around them. The will

of Providence was no doubt to soften, by this eternal flow of the affections, their state of dependence. So often in solitude, so frequently helpless, what would they do without this faculty of dwelling for ever on what is dear to them? It is their thoughts alone which give them activity and life, for their actions are circumscribed; yet, how often is there more to relate in their apparently monotonous existence than in ours!

“I cannot trust myself, even now, to dwell on what those deep and silent feelings were that blasted the fresh spring of my Antonia's days. I guessed them in part, as I listened to Mary's recital. Had I known all that was then told me sooner, I should at once have urged my sister nobly to have sacrificed her hope of happiness to a sense of duty, and given up her lover, or else at once to have set his parents' wishes at defiance and married him at the moment. Any thing would have been wiser than the cruel suspense she had endured. Now it was too late to speak to her. She was not in a state to bear agitation, and I doubted whether even the fulfilment of her hopes would save her from that mysterious power, whose prey I already thought her.

Still, it was her best, her only chance—and with a wounded heart and burning brain I set off the following day for Walone Park.

“ I meant to represent my fears and opinions faithfully to my young friend, and to speak also to his parents. Walone was absent, but Lord and Lady Victor received me with their usual kindness, and heard me with no small surprise. They sympathized with my feelings, and grieved for Antonia—but they frankly owned it was not a match they desired. I was relieved by the friendly and candid manner in which they replied to me, and agreed to stay till Walone’s return, as they would say nothing decidedly, till they had spoken to him and judged by themselves of the fervour of his attachment. He came, and at first was very angry at my interference, and declared I had by my rashness ruined both him and my sister. I remained alone in the great library, while Walone, summoned to his mother’s dressing-room, was giving an account of the rise and progress of his love for Antonia. It seemed to me that the fate of my sister hung upon this conference; and the intense anxiety I endured, gave me some idea of what she herself had been so long suffering.

“ I moved from one chair to another, from one window to the next, trying to summon fortitude and forbearance to my aid, yet shuddering as the sound of a voice reached me : at one moment, impatiently hoping they had done ; at another, fearing so short a discussion must be fatal to the happiness, if not to the existence of one I so fondly loved. My mouth got hot and parched ; my eyes, strained with looking on vacancy, seemed to emit sparks of fire : I closed them, and sat perfectly still. It was intolerable : I started up, and walked out : I could breathe no better in the Park than in the library ; but I could see the window of the room where the deliberation which I had myself provoked, and yet dreaded, was taking place. I was so intently gazing upon it, that I heard not an approaching step, and saw nothing near me till Walone laid his hand on my shoulder. I started, and was vexed with myself at feeling that I changed countenance. Walone, however, was little disposed to observe me : he was himself much agitated, and had an expression of irresolution, the more painful from being so unusual to him.

“ He told me, his father and mother had acted very kindly and openly by him, but at the same time declared their inability to increase his

allowance. It was then for him to decide if he could keep a family on what hitherto had not kept himself; and if his pride would be satisfied at seeing his wife, unable to support her rank, shrinking into obscurity, and forgotten or neglected by his gay friends. This was touching him nearly, for Walone's pride was unabated. A momentary fit of indignation kept me silent. All this he should have known before, and I felt it so keenly, that I determined not to speak till I was quite master of myself. Walone heeded me not.

“He took my arm, and we walked slowly and silently homewards. We had a melancholy and constrained dinner. I was the calmest and coldest of the party, though in one sense more unhappy than the others, because I felt I had lost my sister. Walone was in that state of mind which could easily have been influenced by a word from me, but I was little disposed to such interference. If I thought it necessary to her present comfort that he should marry her, I knew it to be no less essential to her future happiness, that he should not repent having done so. What he did of his own free will, he was firm enough to stand by, and make the best of; what he did by the persuasion of othe

was likely to meet a very different fate. I spoke therefore of politics, of county news—of any thing rather than what engrossed me, but Walone gave short and hurried answers, and we sank by degrees into silence. At last he said abruptly,

“ ‘ Frederick, I know you have so little esteem for wealth, that you will not think it impertinent, if I ask you how you have so long contrived to exist upon nothing ?’

“ ‘ I could scarcely help smiling, at perceiving the train of his thoughts ; and replied slightly, ‘ I fear to be taken for a conjuror, if I answer such a question.’

“ ‘ ‘ I am in earnest,’ said Walone impatiently ; ‘ and I intreat you therefore not to be in a joke.’

“ ‘ ‘ I don’t very well know how to answer you in earnest ; for no one exists upon nothing ; and what is little to one man, is often much to another.’

“ ‘ ‘ But have you ever had much, according to our view of the matter ?’

“ ‘ ‘ Our view of the matter is not the same, for your present allowance would make me affluent. It is true, that I once had more from my uncle, and it made me very happy ; because, as

you know, my family is large and poor ; but I spent then but little more on myself than I now do, and therefore I had never much—not half so much as I could comfortably have spent.’

“ ‘ That brings me to what I want to know—how, on so little have you contrived to look like others ?’

“ ‘ I have *not* looked like others ; but I attracted nobody’s attention, and therefore I was supposed to look like others. I have had but one rule all my life, to go without whatever I was not quite certain of paying for conveniently ; and I have gone without most things. By this means, as I wanted no one’s assistance, no one shrank from me ; as I had no debts, no one had any power over me. I was able and willing, consequently, to enjoy society ; and I was kept by necessity out of many pursuits which I was supposed to avoid from prudence. General principles are no doubt the same for every one ; yet I do not deny, that your situation making you more conspicuous, you could not do what I have done, and still continue to do. What is called discretion in a poor commoner, is often reckoned stinginess in the peer ;

and even if others would forget his rank, he never forgets it himself.'

" 'And ought he?' asked Walone impetuously.

" 'That is difficult to answer, unless we come to particular situations. The noble is sometimes higher than the man; and, in that case, he is right to stick to his rank, as the only thing about him worth remembering. But some have the ambition to soar above their titles, and such men are guided by their own feelings, and not the opinions of others, as to what is incumbent upon them to do, as a branch of the aristocracy of the land.'

" 'Surely,' said Lord Victor mildly, 'it is wiser to be guided by the general opinion and custom as to what is fitting our station, than to strike out new paths for ourselves, and, in the attempt to become more than others, actually sink ourselves into something less?'

" 'Without doubt, my Lord, your rule is the very best general one, because it is the rule for mediocrity, and we all know that is the common lot. As we are very liable to overrate ourselves, it is safe to adhere to such rules, and always absurd indeed to depart from them,

unless we can do it consistently, and upon a higher principle than that which is usually supposed to actuate us. To step out of our character and habits for once, and then return to them again, is only to betray a momentary impulse of passion, and a relapse into weakness.'

" 'You are severe,' said Walone gloomily, who applied my observation to himself. I had not intended to do so, but I could not retract what was honestly my opinion.

" We parted coldly at night, and I announced my intention of leaving them the following morning too early to see them any more. They kindly urged my stay, and I thought it handsome of them to do so, as my mere presence might have had an influence contrary to their wishes. I was not, however, tempted to wait the fluctuations of Walone's plans, and with the dawn I had left the castle. I had a few miles to walk to a spot at which I was to meet the coach, and with a little boy to serve as guide and to carry my baggage, I set forth. At the Park-gate I found Walone awaiting me: he looked oppressed and out of spirits, but he was more affectionate than the evening before.

“ ‘ I have written to Antonia,’ said he ; ‘ will you take the letter ?’

“ ‘ Willingly ; nor do I require, like most private messengers, to know the contents. All I hope is, that you have said nothing abrupt that may in her present state of health be injurious. If you have done so, I must decline your commission. It is sometimes essential that these things should be done, and then, no doubt, in most cases, the sooner the better ; but this perhaps is a peculiar case.’ I tried to still the pulsations of my heart as I spoke, for I felt humbled and wounded at having to implore the compassion of any one for my sister. Walone looked at me with a melancholy smile.

“ ‘ You think, then, I have got up at this agreeable hour to give you the still more agreeable intelligence that I desert Antonia ? I am not quite so bad. I confess to you, that when first I knew your sister, I foresaw no other obstacle to our union than the will of my parents. *That* I imagined time might change. I find now, that without making sacrifices, which I should be the last person to wish them to do, they cannot act otherwise ; and therefore, that in common sense and prudence I ought to look

out for an heiress. It is unlucky that my father can give no more, for it would not matter which of us, Antonia or I, had the money, so that one of us had it. We shall not be comfortable, I fear, together, but we shall be worse apart; for this attachment began too early, and has lasted too long to be crushed by the mere voice of worldly prudence. This is not now a case that will improve by time; therefore, I think, the sooner we are married the better. I have written her to that effect; and I give you the letter, that you may prepare her tender spirits, and prevent her suffering by surprise.'

"This was a commission I was little disposed to decline, and we continued to converse on a subject so interesting to us both, till we reached the coach. I got into it very considerably agitated. I feared to ask myself if this turn in Antonia's affairs would really restore her health? whether, in her delicate state, she was prepared for the trials Walone's narrow circumstances, combined with his peculiar disposition, would abundantly offer? whether, if she detected any lurking reluctance on his part, she would accept him at all? As we cannot dive into the future, it would be wise to spare all such conjectures; but not to hazard them is quite im-

possible, whenever we really are interested in the event.

“You do not, however, want to know by what circuitous ways I informed my gentle sister of my recent visit and its result. Of course, I did not wound her by mentioning any part I had in the business. It passed over as a common recollection of former friendship on my part, and I left her to imagine I had received from Walone the first intimation of their engagement. He came himself shortly after; and if some traces of my first anger still lived in my breast, they gave way to compassion for the wretchedness he endured on perceiving the great alteration in Antonia. Miserable at it himself, he was indignant with every one else who alluded to it, and continually asserted he had never seen her look so well, or half so lovely. Such observations could only be received in silence, and our silence angered him as much as our opposition might have done.

“Antonia meanwhile, always happy in his presence, faded away with the smile of affection and enjoyment on her still beautiful features. The day was fixed for her marriage; Lord and Lady Victor came kindly to see her; every attention to her comfort and her wishes

was shown by every one, and her last hours would have been happy ones, had not all this increased the pang of separation. The day preceding the one fixed for her union with Walone, she was too feeble to leave her bed ; and the day that followed it, her sacrifice was accepted."

Solway paused for a moment, and Sir Hubert saw, in the anguished expression such recollections excited, how heavy the blow must have been at the time it fell.

" I was soon after obliged to leave home," resumed he, " and I did it, I confess, with a cold oppression at my heart, that looked like indifference. Every day I felt Antonia's loss more and more. She was not only my earliest and dearest friend—she was my only one. I had many acquaintances, and felt for many a portion of interest ; but no one but Antonia was necessary to my daily comfort, associated with my continual occupation ; a prominent feature in all my reveries. Without her, my future was as blank as my present was cheerless. The days I had been accustomed to receive letters from her were for very a long time hard to get over. After many hours of struggle and toil would the thought of her steal like a

soft vision over my soul, soothe my weariness, and invigorate my hopes.

“ It seemed to me now hardly worth while to think or feel ; for I had none to tell my thoughts or feelings to, none who cared for either as she had done. I do believe that I left off thinking and feeling for a time ; impressions, feeble impressions, were made on my brain, and died away for want of sufficient interest in them to analyze and comprehend them. I was fortunately obliged to attend to my profession. I did it, indeed, with little alacrity, but I did it, and soon learned to rejoice that I had it to do ; for it was better to think of dull things than painful ones ; and left to myself, the latter would return. Walone had gone abroad ; he was much to be pitied, and I pitied him ; but I was jealous of my own grief, and was convinced that it would survive his, though it looked less vehement.

“ Time went on, and all things continued their course as they did when I cared how they went. My natural good spirits lightened the weight of existence. I had a kind of moderate satisfaction in many things, momentary impressions of pleasure and mirth ; but any thing that strongly excited me continued to be very pain-

ful, for then I looked round naturally for my sister to share whatever touched me deeply. I heard sometimes from Mary, but her letters were short, and more like family journals than those I had been accustomed to receive. She was a good girl, and had been passionately fond of Antonia; but she was not like her, and if she had been, it could never have been the same thing to me. I had seen but little of her, and she was much younger than I. It was, however, with pleasure that I heard she was likely to be well settled. She married a rich country squire, who was not very particularly to my taste; but as I was not likely to see much of him, that mattered little.

“About this time, Lord Victor wrote me word, that if I did not find the Bar answer my expectations, he had a living to offer me rather unexpectedly, the late incumbent having died a very young man. My first impulse was to refuse. I had some ambition connected with my own profession, and very fair prospects in it; besides, I did not like entering the Church merely for a livelihood, without any particular taste for the mode of life. Lord Victor kindly gave me some time to consider. In the mean while my uncle died, left me three hundred

pounds a-year, and the charge of his son's education and property till he came of age. The money was welcome, but not the charge annexed to it. I foresaw, that to execute it properly would take up a great deal of my time, more than I liked to spare. I went to my uncle's house—that house I had left in disgrace in my early youth, and found it much changed. My poor aunt could not grow more vulgar, but she had grown more unwieldy and infirm: my cousin Henry, at that unlucky age when boys are all limb and awkwardness, was so strangely educated, and so deplorably mannered, that I shrank alarmed from the task imposed upon me. The youth, however, had quickness enough to be aware of his deficiencies, and so earnestly begged me not to give him up, that I had not courage to resist his intreaties.

“ I was plunged into fresh difficulties as well as distress by the death of my father. He had been declining from the hour he lost Antonia, who was his delight and pride, and he followed his brother very shortly. The little remnant of his property could barely afford the means of existence to his widow and her two young sons. My rich brother settled a small annuity on his wife's stepmother for her life,

which did not promise to be a long one; but how my half-brothers were to be educated or provided for, I could not discover. After a long struggle with myself, I resolved to give up the profession in which I had fondly hoped to rise, and through which I expected to distinguish myself.

“ I determined to accept Lord Victor’s offer, take my mother, brothers, and cousin to live with me, and thus be always at hand to do every thing I could for them. Some time elapsed previous to my being able to abandon one profession and enter on another: in the mean time, I took a small house near my old friend Captain Seymour, and set to work to polish my ward and instruct my brothers, as well as to prepare myself for my new line of study. I worked hard both for myself and them; but I was disappointed and out of spirits, and every day regretted more and more the days of my early youth. This depression did not last long. I passed my examination, took orders, and repaired to Lord Victor’s, to take possession of the living. The parsonage was an old rambling building, but it was roomy, and well situated. I liked it, and fancied it furnished and comfortable in a moment. Be-

fore I could take any measures to make it so, I lost it by the sudden death of Lord Victor. He dropped down, walking in his own park; and did not survive the attack many hours. I was much shocked, without being aware at first that I should be myself so considerable a loser by the circumstance.

“ Some formality that had been delayed was necessary to make me legitimate possessor of the living. Walone was abroad; he knew nothing of his father's wishes on the subject; he imagined me at the Bar, and was induced by his agent to name a person who had taken care to court those on the spot. For an instant I considered over the feasibility of returning to my former profession, but the moment was gone by. Others had pressed forward to fill up the small gap I had left, and to divide the little attention I had attracted. Perhaps you will say it would have been natural to have been much discouraged; but, remember, I had never been the spoiled child of fortune. I had a natural elasticity of character, and the ill-luck that had overtaken me only seemed, to my sanguine temper, an earnest of some future good in store for me to repair the evil that had occurred. I returned home, but this time I shut

myself less up. It was essential I should be known, even for any *chance* employment in the clerical line. I was so much occupied, that society was an agreeable relaxation to me. I preached occasionally, and was not insensible to the attention with which I was heard.

“ I tried to persuade myself these lurking seeds of vanity and ambition were nothing more than the laudable desire to bring myself into notice for the sake of my family ; but when I had ignorant and frivolous congregations to address, I discovered that the labour of love hung heavily. Not having any fixed employment, I perceived I had little chance of reforming others ; but it was always possible to reform myself, and I thought it might be a good way of acquiring the method. I must confess, also, that no one ever met with more encouragement in his road. My stepmother loved me with a sort of quiet enthusiasm, which was shown more in actions than words, and contributed not a little to my daily comfort ; my two brothers had noble dispositions that it was satisfactory to cultivate ; and Henry, brought into better society than that to which he had hitherto been accustomed, improved rapidly in manner and appearance. He attached himself to his young cousins ; and I had

the comfort of reflecting, that, had I remained in my former profession, the advantage of this intimacy would have been lost to them.

“ Even in my best moments, I had many a sigh to give to my beloved Antonia ! She would have had so much pleasure in the talents and affection of the boys ; she would have entered into all my plans for them, furthered all my views, understood all my wishes !—I was as happy as the consciousness of being useful and beloved can make a man—but I was alone : I had no companion in my family, though all were deservedly objects of my affection. About this time, Seymour came to beg of me to spend a few days with him. He had a large shooting-party—some were pleasant people ; the weather was favourable ; the sport promised to be good. He would not hear of my joining them occasionally, as had been my practice hitherto, and accordingly I did as he wished, taking my ward with me. I found the house very full, as usual, and very gay. Mrs. Seymour had several of her own family with her, which I regretted, as far as I thought about it, which was not much. I did not like Mrs. Seymour, whose unamiable passion for flirtation frequently led her into scrapes, which injured others as much as herself.

“ The more beautiful and engaging and amusing she was, the more angry I felt with her for abusing gifts that dazzled others, and probably misled herself. I had met a brother at her house, whose pert, dictatorial manner finished my disgust for the family. I had also seen Lady Avondale, for whom my admiration would have been boundless, had she made any other choice ; but she had too much penetration to have been deceived with respect to her Lord’s disposition ; and I looked upon her marriage, therefore, as a mercenary and a heartless contract. With these feelings, I met General Parry, his wife, and unmarried daughter. I thought the old man shallow and uninteresting ; Mrs. Parry, cold and formal ; and Jane, nothing at all. In truth, I hardly looked at her, just enough to see she was not to be compared to either of her sisters in beauty. In the evening, she sang, one would have thought, for the sole purpose of showing off Augusta’s voice and manner. Jane sang without spirit or soul, and she was besides hoarse with a cold. As she did not complain, I thought her voice was probably as good as ever ; and only wondered that, in so musical a family, she would sing at all. It could not be called unpleasant, for it was

sweet and in perfect tune ; but it was a careless performance, as if she were thinking of something else, which was provoking.

“ Some days after, as her cold left her, I discovered that her voice came out clear, and more in earnest ; but the first impression was given, and I did not care to listen. I returned home, and thought no more of the Parrys :—not so Henry. It was his first visit to a gay house, he had been enchanted with every thing he had seen, and every body who had spoken to him. For a long time afterwards, he thought every description of a pretty person was like Jane Parry ; and by dint of hearing him talk so much of her sweet smile and bright hair, I persuaded myself I must have been very unjust to have thought so little of her.

“ Next year the lady returned. This time she was without her father and mother. Henry learned in a moment that they were visiting a son who had married and settled near them ; that it was a very gay house, and that Jane had preferred coming to her sister, who was just then sick and alone. He told me this with exultation, for he had no patience with my coldness for this object of his juvenile admiration. Seymour was in town ; and as I really did not like

his wife, I had no inclination to visit her in his absence, but I gave Henry full leave to go and make love to Jane Parry. She was a year or two older than he was, and I did not suppose there would be any serious results to this fancy ; but if there had been, there was not much to find fault with, and I did not want by injudicious opposition to create a violent passion.

“ The ladies were flattered by his attention, and retained him to dinner. He ended by dining there almost every day ; and I, supposing him occupied with Miss Parry, made no remark on his absence. My stepmother at last thought it right to inform me that the gossip of the neighbourhood was Henry’s attachment to Mrs. Seymour. I was petrified ; but as it might be a complete falsehood, I thought I would judge for myself before I said any thing to my ward. One evening when he had dined there as usual, I determined on paying my visit. I took a short cut through the fields, which brought me in at the back of their garden, of which Seymour had given me the key. It was dusk, and there were lights already in the house. I paused a moment before I rang the bell, to survey the interior of the drawing-room.

“ Miss Parry sat with her back to the window,

working, with a melancholy and uncomfortable expression of countenance ; at a little distance, on a *chaise longue*, just unwell enough to look interesting and require attention, reclined Mrs. Seymour—her guitar in her hand, with which she had evidently been charming Henry, who, seated at the other side of the table, on which he leant, was gazing at her in silence and rapt attention. I did not half like the expression of his countenance, but it might only be the effect of the music. I was announced. Mrs. Seymour received me with a sort of languid kindness ; Henry, with emotion ; and Miss Parry, with a change of countenance, in which it was pretty easy to read both the fact of her sister's flirtation and her regret at my witnessing it.

“ I took no notice of the variety and flutter of sentiments which my presence excited, but tried to bring about an easy, general conversation. I failed completely—no one but Mrs. Seymour would talk ; Henry, because he feared to lose one of her words ; and Miss Parry, because she was ill at ease.

“ ‘ When did you hear from Seymour ? ’ It was a natural question as addressed to his wife, and I did so mechanically.

“ ‘ Hear from Seymour ? ’ she repeated with

an effort at liveliness ; ‘ who ever fancied I heard from Seymour at all ? ’

“ ‘ Then,’ replied I, ‘ if his letters are indeed so rare and precious, I ought to be particularly flattered, since *I* have heard from him. He was in hopes to be soon at home.’

“ ‘ No, really ! ’ said she ironically ; ‘ are you sure he has not other hopes by this time ? But I forget ; you are not his father confessor.’

“ ‘ I should be sorry to have that office ; for, I fear, if all the country round came to confess their sins, whether of omission or commission, I should contract at last a most comfortless contempt for my species.’

“ ‘ It could not do you much harm,’ she said coldly, ‘ for it could hardly make you more severe ! ’

“ ‘ Severe ! ’ echoèd Henry ; ‘ my dear Mrs. Seymour, what can you mean ? I never yet saw Frederick severe.’

“ ‘ That is to say, he does not whip his brothers, or document you as yet : but wait a little—all in good time : ’ and she laughed, but there was no mirth in her countenance.

“ Henry lifted up his full heavy eyes, with an expression peculiar to them, and which painted, better than I can express, both his

own affection for the persons he so looked at, and his confidence in theirs. It was not a look to receive unmoved, and I smiled : to my surprise, when I turned to Mrs. Seymour, I saw tears in her eyes.

“ ‘ I see,’ said she, ‘ there are some people with whom you are not severe ; but why will you never smile in my company ? Is it because you never approve any thing I do ?’

“ ‘ Never ! that is a long word ! You cannot wonder, if the employments of a fashionable fine lady should not be congenial with the feelings of a recluse.’

“ ‘ Ay, I know you think me nothing better than a fashionable, fine lady !’

“ ‘ If you were desirous of adopting any other character, with your superior abilities you would find it easy ; but as long as you are content with boundless admiration, you will do to-day just what you did yesterday.’

“ Mrs. Seymour smote her hands together, and repeated in a tone of bitterness, ‘ Content !’ Miss Parry, at this moment, sat down to the piano-forte, and began a piece so noisy, that it would effectually have drowned our voices, had we been disposed to continue our conversation. I certainly was not, and, glad of some change,

got up to carry the fair musician lights, although I perceived she was playing from memory.

“ ‘ Do you like music, Mr. Solway ? ’ said she.

“ ‘ Some music.’

“ ‘ Military music ? or perhaps music like my sister Ellen’s ?’

“ ‘ Just so !’

“ There was a dead silence. Miss Parry had made an effort to address me, and then left it to me to keep up the ball of conversation, or to let it drop : the latter suited me best, and I sat down by her and turned over the leaves of a music-book. I involuntarily stopped, as I met with a Venetian ballad that Antonia used to sing. I had not heard it since her death, and each letter of the title-page gave me a separate pang ; yet I lingered over it, and fondly recalled each note of that pure and silvery voice, which I had so often listened to ; and then lost myself in conjectures as to where and how I should ever hear it again. Oh, that awful uncertainty ! how heavily it falls on the heart deprived of what was most dear to it ! For those we have moderately loved, we can satisfy ourselves by a general idea of some untried happiness in some unknown state ; we can dwell serenely on the goodness of the Supreme

Being, while our reason assents to the belief that a merciful Creator will do the best for his creatures ; but how lively must that faith be, how ardent that piety, which is content to remain in ignorance of the fate of those who are *very* dear to us ! There are moments of pain that even a religious person cannot quite escape : how those unfortunate persons bear up against such pangs who are destitute of religious hope, is more than I can comprehend.

“ When I recovered from my fit of musing, I found Miss Parry still playing : but she had changed her subject—it was a wild air, slow and mournful. Mrs. Seymour was listening to it with closed eyes ; Henry was looking at the musician, but without seeing her, and evidently as absent as I had lately been. When we left the house, I began by observing that Miss Parry did not play as well as Mrs. Seymour.

“ ‘ I don’t know any thing,’ said Henry quickly, ‘ she does as well as Mrs. Seymour.’

“ ‘ How much you have changed,’ replied I : ‘ a little while ago, you thought nothing like Jane Parry. I fancied you almost in love with her. Is it her sister who is the ruling lady of your affections now ?’

“ ‘ I conclude I may admire Mrs. Seymour

—may do her simple justice—without being absolutely in love with her,’ said Henry in a tone of discomfort. ‘I like Miss Parry very well, but she does not like me. Mrs. Seymour told me, she did not wish me to be asked so often—some prudish reason about Captain Seymour’s absence I had no patience with.’

“ ‘Mrs. Seymour certainly is not prudish.’

“ ‘Why should she be? who can find fault with her?’

“ ‘Many persons, and I among others; for she nearly broke my sister’s heart by detaching her husband from her; and now, for want of any thing else to do, she is making out a flirtation with my ward.’

“ ‘With me! oh, no, indeed you are too hard upon her; and even with respect to my cousin Mary, I have often heard her regret the circumstance, and lay the fault on her husband!’

“ ‘I do not say he was blameless; but I do say he would never so publicly have slighted my sister, had not Mrs. Seymour received and encouraged his attentions.’

“ ‘Did you see all this, or did you only hear of it?’ asked Henry anxiously.

“ ‘I saw it, and spoke to Mrs. Seymour, who

promised me to change her behaviour ; but her vanity got the better. There is no dependence on her, in spite of some good points in her character, because she makes no other use of her understanding than to mislead herself respecting the motives of her actions. She is always justifying herself to herself, instead of trying to reform herself.'

" Henry made no other remark ; but three days passed on, and he did not leave home. At last came a note from Mrs. Seymour, reproaching him for deserting a sick, dull friend.

" ' I suppose I must go ? ' said he, throwing me the note, with a curious indecision of countenance, as if he did not know whether he ought to be pleased or not.

" ' You will of course go, if you wish it ; only, if you do, remember, you can never again be three days without seeing her. She will have established a complete influence over you ; and, without absolute rudeness, you will be obliged to be in continual attendance upon her. It is for you to consider if this waste of time will be rational and manly.'

" ' But what excuse can I possibly invent ?'

" ' None ; say simply you are much flattered that three days absence should have even been

remarked, and that you hope soon to be able to express your gratitude for so much kindness.'

"We continued to discuss the matter for a little while. The vanity of so young a man was naturally flattered by the attention of a woman in Mrs. Seymour's situation; but Henry's was a disposition more formed for quiet, silent sensibility, than for vehement and rash passions. He loved me better than he did her, and he prized his own self-esteem above either of us. Eventually, therefore, I succeeded in extricating him out of the net in which he had heedlessly fallen; and not long afterwards I accompanied him to College, where, after some trouble and considerable delay, I settled him to my satisfaction.

"I heard accidentally that Walone, now Lord Victor, was come to England, and being so near town, I went thither to see him. I was a good deal surprised to find him established in a house, which appeared to me enormous for a single man, and more splendid than was quite suited to his income. However, it was no concern of mine, and the idea rather glanced through my mind than rested in it. I gave my card to the servant (for, being unknown, I was of course not admitted), and said I would wait,

while they inquired if any one was in the house. In a few minutes the man returned.

“ ‘ My Lord is not within, but my Lady begs to see you.’ ”

“ I thought it quite natural that his mother should be come up to town to meet him ; and glad to have found her at home, I followed the man, in the expectation of meeting an old friend. I was ushered into a splendid drawing-room, so full of furniture that it required some dexterity so to steer one’s course as to avoid overturning any thing. There were folding-doors into a farther room, which were partly closed, and a muslin curtain drawn over the whole. I could distinguish figures moving about, however, and must have been deaf, if I had not heard what was going on, for several female voices were talking together, and all equally eager upon a very interesting subject to them, no doubt, for it was dress and fashions. I soon made out a milliner, surrounded by band-boxes, recommending gauzes and ribands by various epithets of admiration and applause, which I, in my ignorance, could not but think ludicrously inappropriate. I was terrified at the thought of my excellent, respectable friend, Lady Victor, making herself up into a French doll (for all

this finery was recommended as just come from Paris); but my alarm subsided when I found, by the voice of the purchaser, that she was unknown to me.

“ I grew at last impatient of waiting, and was on the point of ringing the bell, and asking if Lady Victor had been informed that I was in the house, when a small white hand suddenly grasped the muslin curtain, and pulling it aside, discovered to me a little fairy form, with a round merry face and sparkling black eyes, that conciliated at once my good will. The little figure bounded forward, begged my pardon for keeping me waiting, but said she could never have forgiven herself, had she neglected an opportunity of making acquaintance with her Lord’s oldest and best friend. *Her Lord!* I was utterly bewildered; but gravely assured her there must be some mistake, and explained whom I had expected to see. She put her tiny fair fingers, sparkling with more gems than they seemed strong enough to carry, before her face, and laughed with the boundless mirth of a child. I waited for this ebullition of gaiety to subside, and almost doubted whether it ever would.

“ ‘ So!’ exclaimed she at last, in a voice

suffocated with laughter, 'you took me for my good old Mamma-in-law, whom I have not yet had the honour of seeing! Well, I am glad you were by any means tempted to come in, especially as I am expecting my husband every moment, who will introduce me in form.'

"It was a great piece of weakness, no doubt, but this unexpected announcing of my once destined brother's marriage—the actually seeing before me, without the smallest previous preparation, the successor of Antonia—was more than I could bear. I felt myself growing very giddy, and sat down from momentary inability to stand. I would have given any thing to have been alone, that I might have wept freely; but I was not alone, and I could not commence my acquaintance with my friend's wife by tears. I tried to say something civil and common-place, and at this moment Lord Victor came in. His first impulse was pleasure at seeing me. His second, a confused idea of what my feelings might be at meeting the young Countess. His extreme embarrassment had the effect of diminishing mine. I pitied him, and tried to call off his attention from the painful train of thought into which he had fallen, by asking him questions respecting the

countries he had visited, and alluding slightly to my own change of profession.

“ He seemed surprised, and hurt at the information, and I had no time just then to explain all my reasons. He pressed me to dine with him, and was seconded by Lady Victor, who offered me a ticket for her box at the Opera. It was difficult to resist the childish importunity of the one, or the real earnestness of the other; and I agreed to all they asked, though I would have been thankful to almost any accident that could have interfered with my keeping my engagement. None, however, did occur, and I was loth to make any excuse that could be deemed inefficient, lest Lord Victor might suppose that I resented his marriage. I had no right to do that; and, on reflection, I could but rejoice at a circumstance likely to put to flight all traces of the affliction from which he had for a time suffered so much. But though I could reason myself into something like satisfaction at the event itself, I could not persuade myself that I had any pleasure in witnessing it. I was glad he was happy in any way, but I preferred hearing of it to seeing it. Lady Victor, too, was such a perfect contrast to my beloved sister ! Perhaps

it was better so than to have been like, and yet inferior. I soon learned she was an heiress, —they had met in Italy, liked each other almost directly, and lost no time in communicating the fact.

“ Emma Waldegrave had a warm heart, a lively imagination, an uncertain temper, and a good deal of talent, natural and acquired. Here were materials for making a very bad or very good wife. I rather think, by what I have heard, she will eventually turn out well, though the waywardness of a spoiled child made the beginnings a little stormy. I saw but little of her, for I left town very shortly : Lord Victor was not what he had been. His regard for me, I really believe, was rather increased than diminished ; but the inequality of our situations was a barrier neither of us could remove. He was rich, and fashionable, and successful ; I was the exact reverse. I had lived so retired, I thought his society nothing better than an extravagant, frivolous mob ; he had lived so much in the world he would have thought a narrower circle monotonous or pedantic, or both.

“ The lively Emma amused me by her playful manners, and interested me by her kind feelings ; but she wanted the dignity of a

Countess, or even of a matron ; and the heedlessness of extreme youth, added to the levity of foreign behaviour, made her altogether the last person I could respect. I was glad to escape to the quiet of my own lowly home, and the memory of my Antonia. That home was soon to lose all its cheerfulness : one of my brothers was taken by a relation into a banking-house, the other was presented with a pair of colours. When this dispersion took place, Mary's husband offered Mrs. Solway his lodge as a residence. It was a pretty, small building, nicely fitted up, at the Park gates. She was glad to be near her daughter, and readily accepted it. I gave up my house, which, small as it was, exceeded both my wishes and means.

“ I hired two rooms in a farm-house, and should have felt very lonely, but for the unwearied kindness of Seymour, and my growing attachment to his sister-in-law. I do not exactly know by what process my prejudices against the Parry family gave way ; but I even grew indulgent at last to Mrs. Seymour. At least I pitied her, and endeavoured to make her husband more attentive and patient. My situation was not one in which it would have been fair to have tried by any means to engage the

affections of a young woman, whose prospects in life were as good as Jane Parry's. Accustomed to self-command, I was able to enjoy daily her society, without hinting at feelings I ought not to wish shared. It is true, that the extreme coldness of her manner gave me pain, but I would not allow myself to make any great effort to produce a change, fearful that I should become more exacting if I gained any thing. We went on long in this way, and were supposed by lookers-on to be in a state of indifference almost amounting to dislike. Seymour and his wife regretted it, and I could not deceive them. A system is a very fine thing sometimes, but then it won't do to be thrown off one's guard. I was so completely one day.

"I was shooting with Seymour and a party of his friends. We had gone out early, and the ladies were to bring us breakfast at a very pretty spot, with which you are well acquainted, on his property. A tent was pitched; there was plenty of food, which, to hungry shooters, was not an unpleasant circumstance, and fair ladies to do the honours. They all intended to walk home, except Miss Parry, who had given her ankle a slight sprain, and was unable to scramble in woods. She proposed driving her-

self in a tilbury, which accordingly remained for her; but when her brother-in-law heard of the arrangement, he disapproved of it highly. She was not accustomed to drive, and it was a young horse she was to undertake. All the other carriages were sent away, so there seemed no resource. Miss Parry, to satisfy Seymour, said the servant should drive her; but he did not like this, and proposed that I should take care of her, as I had just said I was weary, and would walk home.

“Miss Parry was urgent, almost to rudeness, to prevent this; but Seymour laughed at what he called her prudery, and I could not well decline the task allotted me. I was, however, very considerably annoyed and hurt at the trouble she had taken to avoid owing me so slight an attention; and I determined, since I could not spare her my presence, I would not give her the trouble of attending to me, and would leave it to her to begin a conversation, if she thought one necessary. She did not, and our drive was gone through in perfect silence. I got out at the door to assist her out of the carriage, but she would not wait for that ceremony; and springing out, in her eagerness to avoid my proffered hand, her weak ankle

turned under her, and she would have fallen with her head on the stone steps, if I had not caught her.

“ She laughed with great good-humour, ridiculed her own awkwardness, declared the accident was nothing, though her pale cheek denoted pain, and insisted on walking into the house. Although I supported her almost entirely, the exertion was too much, and she fainted just as we entered the drawing-room. All the house was soon in commotion, and while every one was dispersed in search of remedies, I saw with pleasure the colour come back to her face, and a little motion of the eyelids, which marked returning sensibility. It sometimes happens, that a person in that state, in which they are but half themselves, cannot immediately take up the thread of their former thoughts, and the motives of their actions. Reason, scarcely in possession of its rights, leaves more power to impulse. It was so with Jane Parry, who, unclosing her eyes, and affected, no doubt, by the interest my countenance expressed, let the mask of coldness and assumed indifference drop at once. She did not utter a word ; but her smile, the faint pressure of her cold fingers against the hand that

held them, was conviction to my mind, as sweet as it was unexpected.

“ I was roused from my speechless trance of happiness by the entrance of several persons.

“ ‘ You suffer ? ’ said I then to Miss Parry.

“ ‘ I had forgotten it,’ replied she ; and turning away her blushing face at this timid, but candid avowal of her sentiments, she began talking with great volubility to the housekeeper of her accident. The ankle, indeed, was fearfully swelled and discoloured ; and the village apothecary, who had been sent for, predicted a confinement of some weeks. When the return of Mrs. Seymour left me no excuse for remaining any longer with Miss Parry, I began to recover from the unbroken dream of felicity in which I had for some hours indulged. For the first time in my life, I was impatient at my poverty. I might at times have regretted it before ; I never before attached to it any sense of bitterness. For some days I continued in a troubled state, gloomy and oppressed when alone, alive only to pleasurable feelings when in the society of her I loved. She was so continually surrounded, I had no opportunity of speaking to her ; and being obliged to absent myself for a time on business of my ward’s, I

could not bear to leave her without explaining my situation and feelings.

“I wrote accordingly, and received for answer one single sentence : ‘ If you have hitherto lived on your own income, I cannot see why, when it will be more than doubled, you cannot afford to keep a wife.’ I was perfectly aware that Jane had an independence from a grandmother, apart from what her father might choose to give her ; but I also knew, that living at home, with no real or visible expense, it was all spent ; and to have nothing more for the indispensable calls of a family, than had hitherto been found scarcely sufficient for luxuries and fancies, was a change that I could not hear of her making. I told her, that if my own exertions, or the kindness of my friends, advanced me in my profession, I might ask her to exchange a splendid home for a very humble one ; but that there was a point at which disinterestedness ceased to be a virtue, because it ceased to be reasonable. Upon the means we then had, it required only a chance illness in either of us to run us into debt, and we should then have to turn beggars to our richer relations.

“As soon as my business was terminated, I returned home, and found Miss Parry recovered,

and preparing to quit her sister. She laughed a little at the gloomy prospect I had thought it right to show her, and still more at the idea of waiting an indefinite time for some unknown friend to start up, and present me with a living. 'You will have at last,' she said, 'to end where you might have begun, with the regret of having lost time in solitude and uncertainty, that might have been better employed.' It was after this conversation, that I went home and found on my table a letter from Henry. It was full of exultation. He had distinguished himself, had gained prizes and friends, and, to crown his triumph, it was intimated to him, that if he had any one he wished to oblige, a living shortly expected to be vacant should be at his disposal. Henry, having mentioned me, wrote in raptures to announce what he called his good fortune. Affected by this lively proof of his regard, I yet regretted, both that I must wound him by declining it, and be tantalized with it myself, at a moment when it would have given me so much pleasure. There was, however, no alternative.

"My ward was a young man of very good property; and from the antiquity of our family, and old rights that remained to us, he had

more influence in county-meetings, and more votes at his command, than any one in his neighbourhood. He had very fair talents, and that indefinite charm which is the result of sensibility and benevolence, and which is the only natural, invariable, and unlaborious method of acquiring popularity. It was no wonder that those in power had their eye on the young star, and fancied it might increase in brilliancy, and be worth gaining over thus early. I wrote him a few affectionate lines, said truly that I was proud of his success, and never doubted his affection; but that I was determined against accepting any thing like a favour, that might cramp and fetter him in future. I was not anxious to see my ward a keen politician, but I was desirous that he should be, like all his forefathers, free and independent. Even after I had sent my letter, I felt that the bitterness of the trial was not over. I thought it fair to tell Miss Parry what had passed, and I dreaded her seeing the matter in a different light. She might suppose the affection weak that would overcome no obstacles; and if she did not comprehend the grounds of my refusal, she might see in it a mere excuse to avoid the fulfilment of our engagement. I was saved this aggrava-

tion of my uncomfortable situation. I saw the tears fill her eyes as she read Henry's letter, and felt the quick, impatient motion with which she took up the copy of my reply : when she had cast her eye over it, she put the papers in her work-box, and turned round a sunny face, with an expression of blended kindness and triumph, that assured me we thought alike.

“ The room was full of company : a few minutes after, on approaching the music-stand, where she was seeking for a book, she said to me in a low voice—‘ It was scarcely necessary to give me your answer, I should have known you would not have done otherwise :’ and her eye seemed to thank me for having acted according to her idea of generosity. This was a reward that exceeded the sacrifice I had made, and left me nothing but pleasant feelings. She returned home very soon, and I found it difficult at first to fill up my day without seeing her ; yet was I not as lonely as before, for my future was filled, and for the first time in my life I could see in it definite shapes and specific notions of happiness. If fortune refused to favour us, and I got nothing, our marriage was not impossible; though I still thought I owed it to her to delay it as long as delay held out

any hope of making her sacrifice less severe. It was at this period that first I saw you, and I leave you to judge whether I should not have been very unreasonable and discontented, had I felt or appeared depressed. If I had still exertions to make, and privations to endure, it was what I was well used to, and knew how to bear: had they been doubled, was there not a ray of gladness in my path to make me forget the struggle, or, what is better, to lend the vigour necessary to bear me through it?

“ I was not unhappy, because I had the consciousness of being beloved, and because Providence had blessed me with a sanguine temper that looked for good even in this world, and was certain of it in the one to come. But visions, however pleasing, are but visions still, that the merest accident can rob of their bright colours. To you I owe the ‘sober certainty of waking bliss;’ and amidst the many joyous feelings to which your unexpected kindness has given birth, the hope of being in my turn useful to *you*, and doing something for the man who has done every thing for me, is not the least soothing. You cannot be insensible to the happiness you create; imperceptibly its influence will steal upon you. You will love my wife because she

deserves to be loved, and because she loves you ; and you will learn to rejoice in those rare gifts of Providence, the power and the will to bless all that surround you."

Mr. Solway ceased, but his animated tones yet dwelt on the ear of his patron, who, holding out his hand to him, said after a moment's pause, " Yes, I will try and be happy, since you seem to think it so easy."

CHAPTER XX.

It was not many weeks after this conversation that Sir Hubert De Lisle was called upon to be present at the marriage of Jane and Mr. Solway. It was the last thing he wished to do, but he knew his old friends, the Parrys, would think it unkind, if he absented himself on an occasion that, but for him, might never have existed. All ceremonies are imposing, and it required stronger animal spirits than fell to the share of De Lisle, to meet joyously so awful a one as the present. True, it was a reasonable, and had every chance of being a happy union; he knew and acknowledged this alone in his own room; but when he made one of the group convened together to be merry, he was sad. He beheld the ill-disguised agitation of the bride; and, though he knew her natural sorrow at leaving all she had hitherto lived for would scarcely

outlive the traces of the tear on her cheeks, still for the moment it was sorrow, and depressed him.

One of two things is necessary in marriage ; either the bonds are galling and insure misery to our little brief span of life ; or they make the charm of to-day to be broken and leave the heart desolate to-morrow. It was given but to one couple that we read of to die together, and that tale was fabulous ! De Lisle gazed at the youthful pair before him till he almost thought he heard the knell for one of them. He tried to divert his thoughts, and looked at Mrs. Parry. He gained but little by the change :—as far as possible from her daughter, that her stifled sobs might not reach her ear, knelt the agitated mother ; she did not venture to look at the child she was losing—the youngest, the most loved ! She would not trust herself to listen to the words uttered by her ; but covering her face with her veil, she prayed fervently for the happiness of Jane, though she purchased it by the sacrifice of half her own.

Close beside the bride stood her venerable father ; his white hair, erect military figure, and somewhat stiff appearance, making the paleness of his cheek, and the expression of his mild blue

eye, only more striking and interesting. It is when we see the old stand on the peaceful shore and commit with trembling hands their treasure to the waves of life, that we feel, deeply feel, that the shadow of this world passeth away. Providentially is it ordered that we cannot dwell long on the same thing, or thoughts such as these would make the youngest amongst us out of love with existence, by showing us more plainly than we can well bear, that at best it is a troubled dream. De Lisle, with unblunted, nay, it may be with sharpened sensibility, impaired energy, and a wavering faith, suffered in every way upon this *gay* occasion. He was thankful when it was over, relieved when the *happy pair* (as every one thought it right to call them) had driven off, and would have been better pleased to have made his own escape immediately.

This could hardly be ; the General expected him to remain with them ; Mrs. Parry, even more than her husband, required something to call off her attention from what so painfully ingrossed it. What Sir Hubert could not help doing, he always did with a good grace ; but he was so little accustomed to do what he did not like, or to consider others before himself, that

the day was the heaviest and the longest he almost ever remembered. Jane did not think it at all necessary to give into the prevailing fashion of wandering about from one inn to another, under pretence of admiring scenery you really cannot at such a moment be thinking about. She went straight home, and found no little occupation in making the Parsonage comfortable, and preparing it for her mother's visit, which had been promised for the ensuing month. Aware of her arrangement, Sir Hubert thought his own absence would not be undesirable, and he announced his intention of spending six weeks with his mother. He went thither from General Parry's, but was received only by his aunt, the most tranquil of women, and in every respect the reverse of Lady De Lisle.

"My sister," said she, in answer to her nephew's inquiries, "is not at home; and though she returns to-morrow, you will not see much of her, unless you accompany her on a tour she is going to make in Wales with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Welds."

"And who, in the name of fortune, are they? This is the first time I ever heard their names."

"Then you are more fortunate than I, for I have heard of nothing else for these two months.

Mr. Charles Welds is an idle young man in the neighbourhood, whose father plays at whist, and whose mother gives balls. My sister has brought about a marriage between him and a Miss Matilda Sanson, a pretty, silly girl, with a small independence, and a high notion of the consequence she derives therefrom. Having made the match, it is indispensable that she should manage the young people, who, it is true, have very little idea of managing for themselves."

"I should certainly have no objection to go into Wales with my mother, but it would be a little severe to have two uninteresting strangers of the party."

"Perhaps," said his aunt, "if they amuse your mother, and do not interfere with you, they would rather be an advantage than a nuisance."

"But," said Sir Hubert discontentedly, "women must be attended to, you know."

"I never observed that you spoiled them much in that way; and besides, in the honeymoon, the chances are the lady would really care for no attention but her husband's."

"I can't hope to meet with so reasonable a woman."

"Well, you will see them all to-morrow, and

judge for yourself; you seem at a loss for an employment, and I think you will hardly stay here and play at cribbage with me."

This was certainly not an alternative that would have presented itself to De Lisle. The least amusing and interesting persons whom we have seen from our infancy, been accustomed to respect, though perhaps for no very good reason, and who are associated with sunny spots in our life, though they may in no way have contributed to the brightness themselves, have a sort of claim upon us in after-times that is acknowledged very readily. "I have known such a one all my life," is an excuse quite current in society for putting up with an unpleasant, and sometimes even an impertinent acquaintance. Lady De Lisle's sister had no such hold on the regard or recollections of her nephew. She was a woman of many excellent qualities and some talent; but having early encouraged herself in a love of independence, which she thought very noble, she resented any attempt at being influenced, and scorned those who could be so.

Lady De Lisle's love of managing made her, therefore, the last companion her sister would have chosen. In Sir Francis she had no re-

source; his easy temper and feeble abilities provoked her contempt, and to his amiable qualities, her sterner, more sarcastic temper effectually blinded her. The young Hubert was too shy a child to be caressing, and too ill brought up not to be self-willed. His aunt, baffled in her wish to love him as a boy, had no patience to wait for any improvement time might bring. Instead of accommodating herself to dispositions she could not mend, she withdrew herself altogether from their society. While she had youth and spirits, as she wanted nothing of any one, she was sought after and caressed; when both left her, she was forgotten, and found, when it was too late, that independence is not the first of blessings.

“*Le vin est tiré, Sire, il faut le boire,*” was the noble speech of a military chief to his young monarch at the first action at which he was present. Its full force, on more peaceful occasions, was strongly felt by the deserted Mrs. Ellersby, who lost an unkind husband the second year of her marriage. She uttered no complaint, betrayed no querulousness, lost no time in lamenting a false system, but, submitting at once to what was inevitable, made the best of caring for no one, and being no-

thing to any body. She felt, however, as much as if she had talked about it, perhaps more; and accepted with pleasure Lady De Lisle's offer of living with her on the death of Sir Francis. She gained little by it; for, having voluntarily withdrawn from almost all intercourse with her sister for so many years, they met almost as strangers, knowing nothing of one another's ways, habits, and acquaintance.

Lady De Lisle's restlessness had increased with her years; Mrs. Ellersby's value for repose had also received some accession from time; the one always wanted to be busy, the other dreaded the most necessary exertion. Both however were agreeable, both were well mannered, and both had sense enough to see it would not do to be always pulling two ways. They amused themselves separately, and found at last a sort of point of union when together, by a little mutual concession. Although De Lisle at times distrusted the blandishments of his mother, and would rather have had more sincerity and less flattery, he could not admire the opposite manner of his aunt. Her cold air and sarcastic mode of stating the most simple event, added to his slight acquaintance with her, prevented his feeling any of the kindly

glow of relationship towards her. She, on her part, thought this indifference ungracious and cold-hearted; and forgetting that there are many soils that will only bring forth what you sow in them, she exonerated herself from all trouble, and yet would fain have gathered what she had not planted.

Disappointment is but a bitter ingredient, let it come from what quarter it may: it was not to be expected that it should give more warmth to her manner, or more softness to her expressions. De Lisle, who knew nothing of what was passing in her mind, concluded it was her way; but as he thought it a bad way, he saw no more of her than he could help. He was rather provoked at having to dine and spend the whole evening alone with a sneering old woman, but he could not help himself; so, putting a good face on the matter, he tried to amuse her, which proved less difficult than he expected.

At first, indeed, she rather expressed a wish to be left to herself, and when they were established in the drawing-room, after dinner, she began by offering him newspapers and books, and, putting on her spectacles, took up her own book as a signal that he was really at liberty;

but when she saw him dozing over a Review she had given him, she folded down her leaf and turned to her knitting. De Lisle, opening his eyes with a sort of half start, perceived the change in his aunt's employment.

"How fast you knit!" said he, for something to say.

"Had you been at so interesting an employment as many years as I have, you would go as fast."

"I am not ambitious of the employment."

"No, you are young, and if you do not choose to have any thing to do, you may, at least, always have something to think of. Now I have thought out all my thoughts, and the *reveries* of seventy not being often rose-coloured, I am thankful to take refuge in employment, which cannot well be said to occupy my mind, but which prevents any thing else occupying it."

"Yes," said De Lisle in a tone of discontent, "it is long since I have understood that life is no more than alternatives of discomfort."

"What will it be when you are my age, if you complain of it already? Why do you take pleasure in blotting out the blue in your

sky? leave it to Time, and do not fear his success; he does not require your assistance."

"I am not much afraid of Time. I hardly think he can do me much harm. He will destroy no illusions, for I am not fortunate enough to cherish any."

"You are dreaming, my dear Hubert; we are surrounded by illusions: it depends much on ourselves whether we indulge in pleasing or painful ones: there is nothing real but suffering; nothing certain but death. Now, as it is notorious that none of us are suffering continually, and at all moments, we are of course under the influence of some illusion when we escape it. Imagination is never quite asleep: if we do not suffer it to paint things better than they are, it will be revenged, and represent them as worse."

"I never found my imagination amenable to controul, or I would take care that it should always furnish me with gay visions."

"Are you quite sure you always look for the bright side?"

"Some things have no bright side."

"That is to say, that some things are barren of joyous emotions; but nothing is without its

utility ; and that is a bright side by contrast, the only way in which we can judge, after all."

" I wonder whether all the talking in the world ever convinced any one who felt uncomfortable that he was the reverse."

" That must depend on whether they talk with a wish to be convinced, or merely for the sake of an argument. Facts, indeed, remain much where they were, whether one talks about them or not ; and when our feelings are the direct result of facts, the consolation of words is very slender. Fortunately this is seldom the case—we have few events in our life, and therefore our discomforts arise rarely from positive facts, so much as from a train of thought and habitual indolence, or peevishness, or defect of some kind, very trifling possibly, but as fatal to our peace as heavier matters. Now these things, the discussion of our sentiments in conversation, and the reflection necessary to define them, may influence. If we are led by the remarks of others, and our own consideration, to improve our disposition, there can be no doubt that we shall then have gained by talking, since we cannot grow better without growing happier."

" Which means, that a good person is always happy ? I admire the poetical justice of the

assertion, but am not young enough to have much faith in its accuracy."

"I am no judge of positive goodness, or positive happiness, for I never yet met with either."

"Oh, positive! I only meant good and happy as people are."

"Well, good as people are, means to intend well in a general way (for when it comes to the point, all our actions are a little tainted with human frailty); and happy in this life, means a few bright dreams of youth, and something to love, which is indeed a very mixed felicity, but yet the best we know of. Now, it is clear that the best tempered persons are the happiest in themselves, and the most generally beloved by others. If this be acknowledged with respect to temper, it is fair to say that the cultivation of our best qualities and affections is the best chance for smoothing our path in life. I do not say we shall be quite happy, because that is as impossible as to be quite good. I only say it is our best chance."

"It is but a feeble one, as long as it is possible for very amiable and excellent persons to be the victims of events over which they have no power."

“ You are straying from my argument, which does not apply to persons suffering from peculiar misfortunes, though even those are lessened by the spirit in which they are taken, and the temper with which they are endured. Look around among your acquaintance, and you will see more persons the victims of their disposition, than of any outward calamity. Even if we could see into futurity, and were aware some great evil was likely to overwhelm us, it would be bad policy to indulge in discontent before it actually arrived. It would be suffering pins to be run into us daily, because we might end by falling on a sword. A certain portion of happiness, or perhaps, more properly speaking, of content, is in our own power; and if we won't take the pains of securing it, we do not deserve much compassion.”

“ With so firm a conviction of the efficacy and facility of your doctrine, I should imagine you must be a *particularly* happy person.”

“ Its efficacy, Hubert, not its facility: I find it difficult, very much, because I began it late; and it is a hard matter to break the threads of old habits. I am not *particularly* happy, because, in my situation, there are few, if any, ingredients of happiness; but I am less unhappy

than I might be, if I gave way to every gloomy thought that assailed me."

"Do you then think that I do?"

"It seems to me that you do, because I see no cloud in your destiny, and yet there is one on your mind."

"It is true; but who knows the situation of another? Might I not as well exclaim against your assertion, that you have, in your lot, few ingredients of happiness? You appear to me to enjoy most of the blessings of life—a strong mind, a full purse, a love of independence and talent, and a consciousness of possessing both. As a mere spectator of what every one may see, I should pronounce few women to be better off. Thus do I judge of you; and, in return, you count over my advantages, and dream that my lot is enviable. It may be, we are both wrong, as one usually is when deciding on half a case."

"If, indeed, you have any real affliction, from which there is no escape, and for which there is no consolation, I have done. I minister not to such maladies."

"I hope," said De Lisle, in a tone of unusual feeling, "that you do not refrain from doing so, because you have suffered from them."

His aunt was touched by the accent of kindness, and a tear sprang to her eye, as she replied, "No, my dear; I will make no false call on your sympathy. No great blow has ever fallen on me; I am my own victim: I am a lonely being, unloved and unloving. I drag on an aimless existence (as far as this world is concerned), without object for to-day or hope for to-morrow. It is desolate and cheerless, and all the worse for being, in a great measure, my own fault. In my youth I lived for myself (though I was ready to do a kindness if it came in my way); and in my old age I have no right to expect others will live for me."

"You reproach yourself very heavily for so common a trespass. We all live for ourselves: the active man has pleasure in his activity, which sometimes, indeed, may benefit his neighbour; the indolent man has comfort in his indolence, and consoles himself that he does not injure his neighbour. We all follow the bend of our natural temper, and set to work instinctively to please ourselves."

"You see," she observed impressively, "it does not answer; and now, I hope, you will find my supper more to your taste than my sermon."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next day brought Lady De Lisle, and the young couple she had succeeded in uniting. She was charmed to see her son, and implored him to be of their party. "Charles Weld," she observed, in a hurried under tone, "is a vastly good creature, and not quite a goose either; but I should feel safer if you travelled with us. I can't guess what he would do, poor youth, if any accident were to happen; and then I have not seen you for so long, and you have nothing earthly to do, and came on purpose to see me, and I cannot put off the party, because it was of my own proposing."

De Lisle was accustomed to the torrent of his mother's reasons, which in earlier days had somewhat a bad effect, by deciding him, though not quite in the direction she wished. He not unfrequently made but a feeble opposition at

first, till the nervous dread of being taken by storm excited him, and growing more obstinate at each attack, he resisted manfully what had a moment before been a matter of indifference.

But times were changed now: he had no longer any dread of his mother's management; he was less indignant at the passion altogether since his father's death. Sir Francis had been its principal object; and his son was considerably provoked, because he thought his father was not provoked at all. The thralldom in which Sir Francis was held had not been hereditary. From the moment De Lisle felt certain of his freedom, he paid his mother the attention of a gentleman, and showed her the kindness of a son. Once certain that she had ceased to interfere with him, he would have preferred her not quitting him. But Lady De Lisle, accustomed to rule, was out of her element: besides, she hoped he would marry, if she left him, to escape the trouble of domestic arrangements; and to see him married, was the first wish of her heart. Disappointed hitherto, she had fresh hopes from the faintest circumstance. If he would go with them, he might be tempted by the happiness of the young couple! This did not appear among the list of reasons,

and yet was one of her strongest. She forgot that such a contemplation, very attractive to one who was already in love, excited but little sympathy where the spectator was perfectly calm, and that to the fastidious Hubert it might prove more ludicrous than touching.

She gained her object, however, for he agreed to accompany them. As he stepped into the coach that contained the whole party, he could not help saying to himself, "It is a fine thing for one's patience to grow old! What would I have said ten years ago to a party of pleasure with a pair of fond fools, and my good fidgety mother. Well! we will see if any thing is quite as bad as one expects it to be."

Just because he expected nothing from his tour, it turned out to his satisfaction; the weather was fine, his companions in harmonious temper. The young people, pleased with themselves and every one else; Lady De Lisle inwardly applauding herself at every step for the share she had had in so felicitous an union, and only praying her son's destiny would one day be as fortunate, of which indeed there could be no doubt, if he would only be guided by her! Direct attacks, however, she had seldom recourse to. She had been accustomed to insi-

nuate things to Sir Francis, and leave them to work their own way ; by which means he frequently imagined he was following a bright idea of his own, when he was, in fact, only adopting what had been covertly presented to him. This method failed completely with Hubert, who could not bear to be cheated into doing a thing, however insignificant ; and which possibly he might have done of his own accord, or would willingly have acceded to, had it been fairly and honestly stated to him. He could not endure beating about the bush, and his mother early found she must either quarrel with her only child, or suffer him to be his own master.

Like all persons who have got a system and a habit of managing, she was firmly convinced her's was the only prudent mode of proceeding. What she had found succeed in many cases, she continued to prize in spite of one failure. She forgot that every one is manageable by some point or other, by his good or his bad qualities, his temper or his feelings, his principles or his prejudices ; and consequently, that if she had hitherto influenced Hubert but slightly, it was her own fault for taking the wrong way. Fortunately for him, this did not present itself to her mind, and she had long renounced, though

not without a sigh, all hope of swaying his actions or feelings. Adverting to Jane Parry's marriage, she slightly asked if Hubert did not think Mr. Solway's lot an enviable one?

"That," he replied, "time will show. No one can be quite certain how such experiments will turn out: we see some silly matches consolidate into respectability and comfort, and very many rational ones become most unfortunate."

"You will allow that this, though less brilliant than either of her sisters', has in it to a much higher degree the elements of reasonable felicity? One of these days, my dear Hubert, I do not despair of hearing you confess that you will turn your steps more gladly homewards, when you are sure of a smile of welcome to greet you there, and a pair of bright eyes to shine more brightly as you approach."

"And what if they be sullenly averted, or meet yours but to look reproach and doubt and jealousy? Then, my dear mother, you would agree with me, that my lonely fire-side was a more cheerful sight."

Lady De Lisle smiled, but, not wishing to fix her son's sentiments more firmly in his mind by opposition, she suffered the conversation to drop. Young Mr. Welds however, fancying

himself called upon to defend matrimony under every possible shape, began with a smirk of complacency an eulogium thereon, which, being interlarded with many tender glances at his blushing bride, was so irresistibly comical to De Lisle, that it required all his habitual good-breeding to frame a serious reply. He was, however, spared any rejoinder from the champion of Hymen, by the sudden overturn of their equipage.

Mrs. Charles Welds screamed and clang so firmly to her husband, that she rendered him as useless as herself. Lady De Lisle let down the glasses that were not broken, and Hubert had little difficulty in getting out, (as the carriage was partly supported by a bank,) and inducing his mother to follow his example. The springs had given way—the traces were broken; they were far from any village, and had not above half an hour's daylight before them. All this was very appalling, to the fair Matilda at least, who, seated on a bank by the road-side, wept like a child with terror and vexation. In vain Lady De Lisle would have consoled her distress, or rallied her fears: a coward is not amenable to much controul, and

when she happens to be a fool into the bargain, there is no hope of gaining any thing from her.

Hubert, who was rejoiced that no one was hurt, (not even the poor horses,) could look forward to a walk on a fine evening with considerable philosophy; but as to sitting still to listen to Matilda's complaints, that exceeded his patience. He accordingly proposed mounting one of the horses, and making the best of his way to some habitation, where assistance might be procured. There was a miserable hovel on the side of a bleak hill that rose abruptly before them, from whence issued several ragged children and a large sheep-dog. This party had witnessed the accident, but, either unwilling or unable to be of any use, kept aloof, and continued to gaze with vacant wonder, unmixed apparently with any feeling of interest.

Unpromising as this looked, Lady De Lisle wished, before her son left them, to gain the shelter of the cottage. Recommending it, therefore, to her companions to follow, she took Hubert's arm, and hastily ascended the hill. She stopped for a moment to take breath, and, looking back on the road, could hardly help

smiling at the picturesque confusion it presented. A coach half overturned—four horses unharnessed—three men busily employed in fastening together traces—a servant-maid holding a smelling-bottle to a lady, who appeared to be nearly fainting in her husband's arms. Sir Hubert followed the direction of his mother's eye, and could not help asking her, with a smile, if she regretted very much his not being married to such a woman?

"You would not let her make herself so absurd," was the reply; and before Sir Hubert could declare his disbelief of any one possessing that power, the master of the hut approached them. He had been at work at a distance, and, having been called off by one of the children, came to inform the travellers, that if their carriage was too much injured to proceed, they had a resource in the hospitality of a lady who resided within a mile of the spot, and was in the constant habit of lodging persons who had lost their road, or met with any accident in that desolate part of the country. This was an arrangement De Lisle was reluctant to accede to, as far as he himself was concerned, but he had no right to refuse it for the ladies of the party. Taking one of the children for a guide, he

accompanied his mother to the asylum that so unexpectedly offered itself, sending word to Mr. Charles Welds of their plan, and his advice, that if his wife was unable to walk, she should be placed upon the quietest of their steeds, which seemed to be the only alternative.

CHAPTER XXII.

LADY DE LISLE in vain endeavoured to learn from their guide any particulars of the lady to whose dwelling they were proceeding, for the boy knew but few words of English, and seemed to have forgotten those few in his alarm at the company of strangers. She was therefore obliged to content herself with the scanty information procured from the father, that she was an English person, Lady James-*something*, for the second name she had not caught; and that she was a widow. The shades of evening had completely gathered round them as they descended by a narrow pathway through a thick and gloomy copse which sheltered the house. They rang a bell at a low door, arched over in the clumsiest style of ancient architecture; which summons having been answered by a venerable domestic, the young guide explain-

ed their errand in Welch, and, darting into the thick underwood, left De Lisle and his mother standing before the door of a stranger. Their momentary embarrassment was relieved by the respectful civility with which the servant consoled with them on their misfortune, and assured them his mistress would be proud to receive them.

“Not,” he added, “that my Lady is at present well enough to see you, but our young ladies, Miss Saville and Miss Anne, will do what they can to make you comfortable.” They followed him through a low vaulted passage, into a dark-looking anteroom; from the centre hung an old-fashioned lamp, the feeble light of which was just sufficient to show that the apartment was wainscotted with dark and rudely-carved wood, and altogether without furniture. The servant opened one leaf of a huge massive-looking pair of folding-doors; while De Lisle and his mother hung back for a moment, that their approach might be announced.

Nothing could be more delightful than the change from the lonely country they had been walking through, combined with the gloom in which they stood, to the interior of the apartment which was opened to them. Lofty and

spacious, it was nevertheless light and cheerful; an immense old-fashioned fire-place was blazing with heat, large candelabras, on pedestals, contained lights that shed an equal lustre through the apartment; pieces of armour, and old-fashioned weapons, highly polished, ornamented the walls; banners, with faded colours and tarnished magnificence, still waved proudly over the various doorways; and in the midst of this scene, that breathed of rude and warlike times, sat two fair girls, with a French light table before them, on which stood two ornamented modern workboxes; themselves and their occupation in whimsical though graceful contrast with all that surrounded them.

They were at that age, in general the least attractive of any, because it is awkward and undecided, when we are ambitious not to be thought children, and do not know how to be any thing else; and when the unrestrained hilarity of our earlier years is checked by the flutter of unsatisfied vanity. It would seem, however, that the perfect solitude in which the Miss Savilles lived, had nourished in their tender minds no such conflicting thoughts. The composure and simplicity of their manner was in no way ruffled by the

unexpected appearance of strangers. The eldest arose with the graceful ease that may be acquired from long intercourse with the world by any disposition, but is original and natural only where the persons think less of themselves than others; and while she was saying all her situation and that of the strangers made judicious and pleasing, her more lively sister busied herself in placing an arm-chair for their guest, taking her shawl, and showing her in silence all those attentions so many people talk so much about.

When the particulars of the accident were made known to them, Miss Saville instantly suggested sending a low garden-chair of her mother's for Mrs. Welds, and her sister left the room to give the direction. De Lisle made some apology for giving so much trouble, and from his expressions Miss Saville perceived his sympathy with the distresses of those he had left behind was not keen. She made some good-humoured observations on his hard-heartedness, openly professing the greatest commiseration for cowardice; because, though a real suffering, it was one nobody pitied. She received its victim accordingly with the greatest kindness; listened to her complaints as if she

had thought them both reasonable and natural ; and by her soothing and gentleness restored the fair Matilda's smiles, which had been banished, not only by her alarm, but by a latent consciousness that it had exceeded the occasion, and made her an object of ridicule rather than compassion to her party.

A plentiful supper of the simplest fare was very acceptable to the travellers; and Sir Hubert, having in vain expressed his intention of not trespassing on their hospitality, was ushered into a neat, small bed-chamber by young Saville, a lad of about twelve years old, who had joined them at supper. Left alone, De Lisle looked round him, and wondered what there was particularly to admire in his apartment. The walls were whitewashed, the mantelpiece was wood ; the grate, low, old-fashioned, and not superior to any in a poor cottage ; the sides of the fire-place were lined with Dutch tiles, which, though very clean, were certainly not handsome ; the bed was also humble, and its curtains were of the commonest check ; the floor was covered with a mat, and a sheep's skin was laid before the fire, by way of rug. He could not understand by what magic the whole

looked so much more comfortable than his own finely-furnished rooms.

"It is part of the charm of the house," thought he; "for who would believe I had spent a most agreeable evening with two children?"

There is no one more apt to enjoy Nature where she is really lovely, than those who have been surfeited with art. Like most fastidious persons, De Lisle was persuaded that every thing out of certain rules, and a particular society, could not fail of being vulgar. All he had hitherto seen had confirmed this idea; and when he was least thinking about it, on a careless leaf of his life is found the representation of all that is most attractive, the union of purity and grace in the most complete seclusion. Anne promised to be handsomer than her sister, and her laughing eye and dimpled cheek could not fail of pleasing. Hubert gazed on her with pleasure, but he returned to her sister's more serene countenance; not that he admired it more, but that it reminded him of some one he had known in times past. Who that was, he strove in vain to remember. Something, too, in her manner and tone of voice strengthened the illu-

sion, and seemed perpetually struggling to give consistence and colour to some faded fancy, some remembrance nearly obliterated.

He fell asleep in the midst of these thoughts, but was not assisted to unravel them by any of those opportune dreams by which illustrious heroes in novels are at times visited, to the consolation of the reader. He was awakened early in the morning by a child's scream, whether of joy or terror he was too little accustomed to children to distinguish; but starting up, he had not many paces to take to the window, from whence he saw two or three curly-headed infants surrounding a swing, from which one of them had fallen; the others were loudly calling Gertrude, and the eldest Miss Saville was soon amongst them. She was in the coarsest peasant dress, but the dress of that part of the country is extremely picturesque, and De Lisle thought her a more striking figure than she had been the evening before in her white frock.

He looked at his watch, it was just six; he held it to his ear, fancying it must have stopped, but soon perceived his error; and not thinking his room looked quite so gay in the absence of a blazing fire, he got into bed again, well aware that none of his party would

be stirring for some hours. Going to sleep with the sun in his eyes he found impossible, and while he lay ruminating on the advantages of getting up, his eyes strayed to the only useless thing in the room,—a small drawing that hung facing him. It was a pretty landscape, and one that he could not fail to remember, for it was a view taken at Spa from the very hill where he had so often begun sketches that, with his accustomed idleness, were never finished.

There were few buildings in the drawing, but there was a light curling smoke ascending above the trees, that indicated the situation of Madame de Lausanne's house. He got up to examine the view nearer; he looked at the buck,—there was no name but a date. It had been done in the year when he was there—the happiest year of his life. The train of thoughts that followed did not induce sleep. He dressed himself leisurely, and took his hat, with the intention of joining the children in the garden. As he entered it, he was almost tempted to take a sketch of the group before him. Two of the children were mounted on a low pony of their elder brother's, who was guiding the animal for them. Gertrude was teaching another to knit; and Anne, with a basket on

her arm, was gathering flowers, and singing during her occupation, from a mere ebullition of good spirits, an air with which Hubert was well acquainted. He approached nearer, and distinguished the words:—

“ No—life is a waste of wearisome hours,
Which seldom the rose of enjoyment adorns ;
And the heart that is soonest awake to the flowers,
Is always the first to be touch'd by the thorns.”

The fresh, unbroken voice of the songstress, her radiant brow, on which the shade of care had never glanced ; the smiling lips that sang of suffering, as not only doubting its power, but, ignorant of its existence, fearless of prophesying evils unknown and unlooked for, struck a damp over the susceptible spirits of De Lisle. It was a momentary chill, arising from the consciousness that so fair a vision was born to suffer and to die ; but it yielded quickly to the exhilarating smile with which she met him. “ At least, she does not suffer *now*,” thought he, and his own spirits rose almost to the tone of gladness from which her's never fell.

He found young Saville had been already to expedite the tardy operations of the person who had undertaken to mend their carriage ; that

two other boys had departed to their daily lessons at the house of the clergyman; and that Gertrude and her sister looked upon the day as far advanced. His inquiries for their invisible hostess were answered by an invitation from Miss Saville to visit her mother after breakfast; who mentioned, at the same time, that she was an old acquaintance of his, though one who had probably escaped his memory. She said no more; and De Lisle, ashamed of recollecting nothing about her, did not like to ask any questions, trusting to remembering her when he saw her, or guessing from her conversation where he could have known her.

The dressing-room to which he was introduced was rather darkened, and his eyes, from just coming out of the strong light, could at first distinguish nothing beyond a female form in an arm-chair. When she arose, however, and addressed him, he recognised with some pleasure as well as surprise, Anne Talbot, whom he had not seen for years, and of whose marriage he knew nothing. He was at no loss now for the likeness that had struck him in Gertrude.

His fair hostess received him with a degree of cordiality which many persons are incapable of feeling towards those they have not met or

thought of for a long time. In truth, both she and De Lisle forgot they had parted with so much indifference; they recollected only that they had known each other well in gayer and more careless hours; that they had seen and suffered much since that fortunate period; and that the result of their experience was a better opinion of each other. Lady J. Saville had known so many young men with nothing to recommend them—so many more with positive qualities that were objectionable—so many vulgar-minded and mannered persons, who fancied themselves clever when they were only consequential, or fascinating when they were merely conceited, that the recollection of an unaffected, upright, and well-bred youth, who was nevertheless a favourite of nature and of fortune, came over her mind with a refreshing power, like the long-forgotten tones of some sweet music.

Sir Hubert's feelings were even more agreeable: we like at any time to see a person whose presence reminds us of a good-natured action of our own. De Lisle, it is true, had often done real services to his friends, and never intentionally injured any one—for even Cornelia, the heart-broken, deserted Cornelia, though he

shudderingly acknowledged her to have been his victim, fell a sacrifice to a want of virtuous resolution on his part, rather than to a wish of inflicting pain, or to a plan of selfish felicity; that was to entail misery on another.

So far he might "lay the flattering unction to his soul," and try to shake off the weight on his conscience, by assuring himself that he could not have foreseen the wide ruin he was making. But Hubert, though he could err from weakness, could not outrage his understanding by excuses that many would have caught at. He knew that to do evil, and hope to be exonerated from any of its possible consequences, is only to add folly to vice. He knew that he had been guilty—he felt that he had been punished—and he never forgot either the guilt or the punishment.

The same susceptibility which made him so bitterly alive to that sad page in his life, lent a sort of vague, undefined pleasure to all his recollections of the Talbot family, to whom he had devoted himself with the ardour of apparent friendship, simply because they stood in need of his assistance. He knew they thought even more gratefully of his services than they deserved; and, as he advanced in

years, and saw more of the world, he learned to appreciate still more highly the simplicity, sincerity, and forgetfulness of self, that distinguished the sister of his friend.

He forgot the juvenile pique excited by her indifference; and seeing in it only the rare absence of all coquetry, often reproached himself afterwards with not having cultivated a friendship with almost the only woman he had hitherto met, who would not have ended by expecting a livelier sentiment.

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